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December 2009

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MAVERICK IS A complex word for many people in football. Most coaches hate anything associated with the word; indeed they tend to be suspicious of any player who dares to be different.

Yet for those same reasons, most fans can identify with mavericks, the free spirits who entertain as much as infuriate. For the media, meanwhile, mavericks can mean many different things, but they almost always make good copy.

By definition, there's no such thing as a typical maverick. In this issue, we highlight three players who, for very different reasons, defy convention and divide opinion (page 44).

Zlatan Ibrahimovic has, rightly or wrongly, acquired a reputation as a player who disappears in big games. Yet how many people can lay claim to five league titles – seven if you include the two won with disgraced Juventus – in nine years?

Antonio Cassano generates as many headlines for what he says and does off the pitch as for his playing exploits. But he remains an hugely intriguing personality.

And Juan Sebastian Veron, for all his perceived failings in England, has proved on his return to Argentina that he remains an exceptional footballer. Veron follows in his father's footsteps when he leads Estudiantes to the Club World Cup, FIFA's very own maverick tournament next month.

There's a lot to pack in this issue, with our Club World Cup preview (page 90) and a review of the Under-20 World Cup (page 81), whose stars are profiled in Talent Scout (page 62), not to mention our continuing World Cup countdown (page 52).

We will review the World Cup draw next month, when we will also announce the winners of our annual awards. If you have not voted yet, there is still time to do so at www.worldsoccer.com.

GAVIN HAMILTON, Editor
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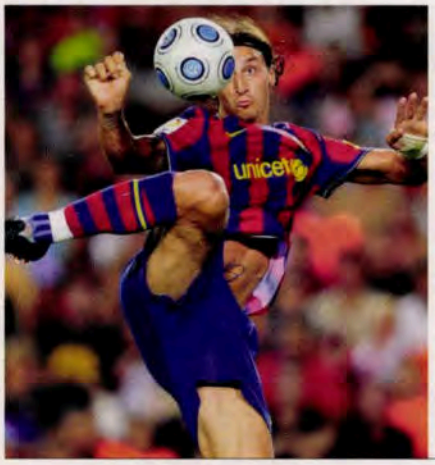

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...IN PICTURES

The global game caught on camera

Stadium of light...Cape Town's new Green Point Stadium, venue for eight games including a semi-final, is illuminated for the first time as it undergoes tests prior to next year's World Cup

Crunching tackle...Adrian Mutu keeps his eye on the ball as he is "tackled" by a Debrecen defender

Swine fever...Paris Saint-Germain players and officials return home after their game at Marseille was cancelled following an outbreak of swine flu in their squad

Masked man...Christophe Grondin of Belgian club Gent sports a new line of protective headgear

Cypriot wall...it took eight APOEL defenders to block this Porto free-kick in the Champions League, but they still lost 2-1

Crouching tigers...Al Ittihad fans cheer on their team against Nagoya Grampus in the semi-final of the Asian Champions League

Walking alone...Manchester United striker Michael Owen leaves the field in front of his once adoring Liverpool fans after the Premier League holders suffered a 2-0 defeat at Anfield

Brian Glanville

...on the continuation of Blatterism....Paul Elliott's appointment...Liverpool's woes...Arsenal's No1 problem...and questions over Capello's England

GERMANY, sensationally but perhaps explicably, have decided to equip their World Cup players in South Africa with body armour, to be worn when they are outside their tightly guarded headquarters. Not that even these precautions could be wholly effective. A gangster, after all, could shoot you in the head or even the legs – the principal weapon in any player's armoury.

But the symbolism is alarming, coming not long after a senior Swedish official seconded to the South African organisers came home in a state of alarm. The criminal situation, he proclaimed, was abominable. He has banned his own two adult sons from attending the tournament.

The folly of FIFA deciding a second time that South Africa was the best alternative has been utterly exposed.

In 2006, as we know, what saved the tournament from South Africa was the gloriously idiosyncratic decision of an elderly New Zealand representative to abstain from voting, thus allowing Germany to prevail.

Blatterism has ruled again. But it would not have been able to do so were it not for the pathetic biddability of so many nations. Yet this was how the outrageous Joao Havelange stayed in presidential power for 24 years. FIFA today remains a rotten organisation. You have only to look at the strutting insolence, as the journalist Andrew Jennings regularly does, to know as much. Despite his many and various manoeuvres – read Jennings' devastating book *Foul* – the fact Jack Warner controls the 40 votes of CONCACAF enables him to strike pompous and disgraceful poses, often at the expense of the FA's attempt to procure the 2018 World Cup.

> "FIFA today remains a rotten organisation. You only have to look at the strutting insolence to know as much"

And when he comes to England, one incredulously learns, he is "wined and dined". Humiliating.

Striking a pose...Warner has been critical of England's bid for the 2018 World Cup

GOOD news to learn that my old friend Paul Elliott has been placed on England's 2018 World Cup committee.

Paul was a centre-half of great accomplishment, playing for Charlton, Luton, Aston Villa, Pisa in Serie A, Celtic and ultimately Chelsea – where his career was ended at the age of 28 at Anfield with a challenge by Liverpool's Dean Saunders. Paul sued in the high court – I was closely involved in the preparation of his case – but unfortunately lost, costing him £500,000 in fees.

LIVERPOOL were duly handed a potential "get out of jail" card when they beat Manchester United 2-0 at Anfield. The end of last season saw Liverpool at Old Trafford sensationally thrash United 4-1. Fernando Torres, Liverpool's Spanish striker, was unplayable, Nemanja Vidic, the United centre-half, was inept.

Irrespective of what Liverpool have or haven't done so far this season, there's no doubt, least of all in the minds of an incensed support, that things are very wrong with the club. The American owners, Tom Hicks and George Gillett, frequently bickering, have notoriously failed to work out a joint policy. Maybe this will change, but as to Rafa Benitez and his transfer policy, words fail one.

He should have moved heaven and earth to have kept Xabi Alonso, the architect of his attack with his lethal passing, proclaimed by Steven Gerrard not only for its accuracy but for the speed at which it was delivered. First explained as a clash between Benitez and Alonso because he was refused permission to attend the birth of a child, it then became more likely that Alonso wanted to avoid the looming 50 per cent tax on his income, in which case it would surely have made sense for Benitez to cover the difference. Not least as he had splashed out some £20million on a crazy transfer of Robbie Keane from Tottenham – where he was all too

Error of judgement...Benitez let Alonso go

quickly back again – or £17m on Glen Johnson, a talented attacking right-back who finds it hard to defend. The word is that when Johnson came from Portsmouth, Pompey still owed so much on the Peter Crouch transfer that the actual fee was much less.

How Hicks and Gillett must be regretting the fact that only recently did they extend Benitez's contract, meaning that were they to get rid of him now, it would cost them £20m! Plus the pay-offs to the army of subordinates whom he has hired.

WAS it wise of Arsene Wenger to go with his young inexperienced Italian keeper Vito Mannone at the expense of the Spaniard Manuel Almunia, who not so long ago was being tipped as an England convert. Mannone had a fine game at Fulham, where Arsenal were lucky to win, but gave away a bad goal at the Emirates against Birmingham.

You have to go back to Bob Wilson to find an imposing Arsenal goalkeeper, followed majestically by Pat Jennings. Such keepers today are thin on the ground.

WE now know most of the qualifiers for the World Cup finals. But how much do we really know? Especially about Fabio Capello's England.

The victory against a feeble, and enfeebled Belarus – there was no Aliaksandr Hleb on parade – at Wembley once again showed Peter Crouch as what you might cruelly call a sublime rabbit killer. No disrespect; this is a player I have admired for years for his indisputable qualities. Tall and towering he may be, he has a very neat touch on the ground, and his sheer height enables him to win balls in the air. But he has no real pace and the many goals he has scored come largely against inferior opposition.

Emile Heskey is thought to be, in Capello's view, essential to support the irreplaceable Wayne Rooney, but he simply doesn't score goals and cannot this season even hold a regular place in the Aston Villa attack.

Who, then, might be the spearhead? I'd have plumped for Jermain Defoe, an utterly different kind of striker and, as he showed on his two recent appearances as substitute, a scorer of important goals, possessed of pace. Yet after his shocking stamp on Aaron Mokoena at Portsmouth, severe doubts about his temperament must arise.

Rio Ferdinand remains a problem and puzzle. That string of blatant, costly errors both at club and international level have made him a serious potential risk. The problem being, who might replace him? Once upon a time, there was Jamie Carragher, but the tactless Steve McClaren knocked that on the head by first playing him out of position at left-back, then dropping him for no clear reason, so that Carragher dug in his heels and said he would never play

Costly mistakes...Ferdinand

for England again. Alas, his form so far this season has been such that he would be a bad risk if he did.

Who else, to partner the commanding John Terry? There is no obvious choice and only limited time for Capello to experiment. Gary Cahill, the centre-back discarded by Aston Villa but now flourishing at Bolton, could be a candidate. So could the 22-year-old Ryan Shawcross, 6ft 4in tall, blond hair severely cropped, an inspired coup by the Stoke manager, Tony Pulis, who snapped him up as a Manchester United reserve and to whom Shawcross pays generous tribute. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating and it may well be too late to find out.

And David Beckham? Oh, spare us the casuistry, the prolix defences, of a player who should no longer be near the national team, one-paced as he is, when there is such a wealth of quick young candidates.

Given the nature of an unimpressive field, I don't think England will disgrace themselves in South Africa. But they surely won't be the winners. ●

GOALS
WE'D LIKE TO SEE AGAIN...

Over and in...Dessena executes perfect scissors

1 Lucas Viatri, Boca Juniors v Racing
Takes a cushioned back-heel return pass from Juan Roman Riquelme and finishes well

2 John Goossens, NEC Nijmegen v Den Haag
Controls the ball on his chest, flicks it up with his left foot, then volleys it over the goalkeeper from 25 yards

3 Adel Taarabt, QPR v Preston
Controls the ball on the halfway line and sets off on a mazy run, beating three defenders before curling a shot into the corner

4 Daniele Dessena, Cagliari v Catania
Meets a right-wing cross with a superb overhead kick into the corner of net

5 Rade Prica, Rosenborg v Aalesund
An unstoppable thunderbolt of a free-kick from all of 30 yards

6 Dragan Stojkovic, Nagoya v Yokohama
A fine volley from the coach while standing in his technical area. It didn't count but is well worth a view for the technique alone

AND ONE TO FORGET...

Pepe Reina, Liverpool v Sunderland
Darren Bent's shot canons off of a beach ball to leave Reina completely perplexed and wrong-footed

Life's a beach...Reina

To see clips of these goals, visit www.worldsoccer.com

NUMBERS GAME

46
days Juande Ramos lasted as CSKA Moscow coach before being sacked

£230
value of the handbag given to the wife of CONCACAF chief Jack Warner by England's 2018 World Cup bid – which was then reportedly handed back

£500,000
the alleged profit made by members of Warner's family from the re-sale of 2006 World Cup tickets

17
Helsingborg shirt worn by Henrik Larsson and now retired by the club

11
goals, including nine in the final nine minutes, scored by promotion-chasing Viana against Chapadinha in a Brazilian second division match

6
titles won by six different teams in the past six years in Sweden, with AIK following Kalmar, IFK, Elfsborg, Djurgarden and Malmo

29.9
per cent of Arsenal shares owned by American Stan Kroenke – the maximum allowed before a full takeover is triggered

84
Goals scored by Sao Paulo goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni following his winner in the 4-3 victory over Santos

REPORTS we couldn't make up

Under-17 skipper...Chukwudi

25, GOING ON 17

FIFA is coming under pressure to investigate claims that Nigeria's captain at the Under-17 World Cup, Fortune Chukwudi, is actually 25 years old.

Adokiye Amiesimaka, who used to coach Chukwudi, claimed in a newspaper column that the player is at least eight years older than he says he is, saying that Chukwudi played for his Sharks youth team as far back as the 2002-03 season.

"I was chairman of the Sharks of Port Harcourt," Amiesimaka wrote in his column in *The Punch*. "I decided to have a feeder team of fresh school leavers not older than 20 years. I also doubled as the coach.

"One of my key players then is the current captain of our so-called Under-17 team.

"By his own admission at that time, that is seven years ago, he was 18 years old. How can he be eligible for this tournament when he is not less than 25 years old now?"

FREE BURGERS FOR FAT PLAYERS

Thailand's national team have a new secret weapon in their campaign to qualify for the next World Cup: free burgers, courtesy of a new three-year, £545,000 sponsorship deal with McDonald's.

The fast-food chain have agreed to provide the Football Association of Thailand (FAT) with £450,000 in cash and the rest in "products" in exchange for shirt sponsorship.

"This will be a great help towards our efforts to reach the 2014 World Cup finals," FAT president Worawi Makudi said.

"This funding will help develop our game, especially youth football – and all the players, junior and senior, will get to enjoy the food too."

Chipping in...Thailand's new sponsor

RUMOURS we'd like to believe

For sale...Kuranyi

- Reports in Germany suggest that cash-strapped Schalke will be forced to sell striker Kevin Kuranyi to Hamburg in January to raise funds.

- *Cadena SER* radio station in Spain claims Atletico Madrid are hoping to bring in Arsenal youngster Fran Merida, who is an Atletico fan.

- *Corriere dello Sport* believe Roma's Italy midfielder Simone Perrotta will join Besiktas in the next transfer window. The same paper is flagging Milan's interest in Tottenham's unsettled Russian striker Roman Pavlyuchenko.

- According to Spanish daily *AS*, Brazilian club Corinthians of Sao Paulo want to sign Real Madrid midfield veteran Guti, who is currently out of favour with coach Manuel Pellegrini.

Unsettled...Guti

Paul Gardner

MLS needs to flash some serious cash

THERE IS, I detect, some lack of understanding outside the United States about the structure of Major League Soccer (MLS) and what the future holds in store.

When MLS began in the mid-1990s, a single-entity concept was adopted to ensure investors wouldn't go bankrupt trying to outspend each other. Resources were pooled, spending limits established and the league itself became the guardian of what was spent on players. In fact, the league, rather than individual clubs, negotiated and owned player contracts. The league also paid the players.

That was the situation when MLS started. But time races ahead. The competition has survived and done well in the commercial areas of sponsors and marketing. The questions to be asked now concern the football itself. And there are major difficulties beginning to arise; difficulties that are the direct result of MLS having so much success.

European trail...Altidore joined Villarreal of Spain in 2008 and is now on loan at Hull City in England

"Kids join European clubs where the money is better and there is a glamour MLS cannot match"

Financial survival

Single entity was about restrictions, particularly on spending. But those restrictions, so necessary for financial survival, are now looking more like a straitjacket that is dooming the league to permanent second-division status.

Were MLS operating solely within the US, and drawing playing talent solely from home soil, everything would be fine and the league could be run on the cheap. It has been so run for 14 years, with a salary cap for each team of approximately £1.4million for the whole squad of 20-plus players.

But football knows no boundaries – and it is already clear that MLS, like it or not, is now in competition with the rest of the world for playing talent.

The first sign that the MLS owners themselves felt that something had to change came after the 2006 season, when the Designated Player (DP) rule was passed, allowing each club to sign a player whose salary would not be restricted by the low salary cap. Enter David Beckham.

But the DP rule was a compromise as one star player per team does not change the overall picture of a league existing on scraps. The inability to compete on the world market extends to young players who are increasingly beyond the range of MLS. That situation was foreseen, but it was believed that the US, with its millions now involved in youth soccer, could produce its own players.

Not only has that not happened to anything like the extent required, but foreign clubs are aware that the US is producing some good youngsters. Kids fresh out of college – or in some cases, bypassing college altogether – go off to join European clubs where the money is better (the salary for a young player in MLS starts at £12,000) and there is glamour that MLS cannot match.

Players such as Jozy Altidore, who made his MLS debut for New York Red Bulls at 16, have been lured overseas – even though the striker has played more international games for USA than club games in Europe.

To keep the fans that it has built up, and to attract new ones, MLS needs to up the quality of its game each year. This will not be possible under the current stringent monetary controls. Those controls – starting with the salary cap – will have to be relaxed or MLS could dawdle along as a permanently inferior outsider to the main world scene. But that does not sound like something to satisfy any big-time American investor.

Such people do exist, but at the moment they own clubs such as Manchester United, Liverpool and Aston Villa. While the home-grown game fails to nurture big-time ambition they are not interested. Sooner or later, MLS will have to start spending some serious money. ●

David Conn

Reality bites for Liverpool

AMID THE FALLOUT from Liverpool's stumbling performances in the Champions League group stage and Premier League defeats, a piece of old wisdom became slightly lost: there is a very fine line between failure and success.

Rafael Benitez' security in the Anfield boss' office became openly debated for the first time, along with the deep holes in his squad and over-reliance on the creaking bodies of Steven Gerrard and Fernando Torres. Yet this soul-searching came about only because of two last-minute goals by Lyon, the first which snatched a victory for the French club at Anfield, the second to deny Liverpool a win in Lyon.

Had those goals not been grabbed, Liverpool would have been spared the airtime which coalesced into a unanimous view: Benitez' season, and the coherence of his management, has unravelled.

Perhaps, though, it was fitting that the pricking of Benitez' aura should begin with that narrowest of thrusts. There has been a sense, despite the club finishing second in the Premier League last year driven by wondrous performances from Gerrard and Torres, that Liverpool's challenge to United, even their presence in the top four, has been an exaggeration of the club's true position.

Even as their captain and new Spanish golden boot drove them on, they have, in truth, been falling behind. Injuries, some eccentric player trading and the sale of Xabi Alonso have all played their part, but Liverpool's claim on the elite, and the funding of Benitez in the transfer market, were going to slow sometime.

They remain a huge name, particularly in Europe, where Lyon themselves seemed overawed at home until they shook themselves at the end, but in this era, where money counts for so much, Liverpool are struggling to keep up. Manchester United's turnover last year of £256m was almost £100m more than Liverpool's, a huge divide.

Arsenal then recorded the highest annual income ever made by any English football club, £313.3m, boosted by the flats finally shifting in the structure of the old Highbury stadium. Chelsea have the oligarch backing of Roman Abramovich, but even without him, in a west London home where they can charge more for tickets and lay on more corporate feasting than any Merseyside club, Chelsea's turnover was £213m.

Liverpool, who made £159m in the year to July 31 2008, after a season in which they lost only narrowly to Chelsea in the semi-final of the Champions League, are operating, in reality, a long way behind the other big three.

Under fire...Benitez

Shiekh Mansour of Abu Dhabi has targeted a top-four finish from the £200m he has spent buying players for Manchester City, which makes Liverpool's hold shakier than for years. Losing out on the Champions League knockout stage represents a financial blow, but not as fierce as missing out on qualifying altogether, which has now become a possibility at Anfield.

It is unusual for the Liverpool veteran centre half-turned pundit Mark Lawrenson to stray in his comments from the patterns on the pitch, but even he reacted to the draw in Lyon by broadening the discussion to the club's north American owners. Tom Hicks and George Gillett, when they took over in February 2007, promised, Lawrenson reminded us, to have a spade quickly in the ground to build Liverpool a new stadium on Stanley Park. This is the plan, laboriously long in the hatching, for Liverpool to expand red bums on seats to 60,000 or 70,000, make more money and so be able to compete meaningfully at the top.

That was the only reason why Liverpool was for sale in the first place, because the former chief executive, Rick Parry, and the former chairman and majority shareholder David Moores, who sold his shares to Hicks and Gillett for £90m, argued they needed rich men to stand behind the money which would be borrowed to build that stadium. As was immediately apparent, Hicks and Gillett borrowed the £185m to buy Liverpool in the first place, and have since loaded that debt on to the club. In that 2007-08 year, despite a flourishing season for Liverpool, interest payments of £36.5m helped push the club into a £42m loss.

"The narrow margin of two late goals from Lyon revealed, brutally, the full extent of the club's underlying problems"

In the meantime, not one sod of Stanley Park has been lifted to make way for the new stadium, which forms part of wider regeneration plans for a battered Anfield neighbourhood. Plans that are on hold for the forseeable future.

Critics of Benitez pointed out, validly, that he has been given significant money to spend by Hicks and Gillett despite that stagnation, yet he has failed to build a squad with sufficient depth up front, or at the back. Liverpool's time at the top has been borrowed for a while, and the narrow margin of two late goals from Lyon revealed, brutally, the full extent of the club's underlying problems. ●

HEROES...

ALCORCON

The tiny club from the third tier of Spanish football pulled off the shock result of the season so far when they beat Real Madrid 4-0 in the first leg of their Spanish Cup tie.

Upset...Alcorcon

Battling back...Gonalons was on target for Lyon against Liverpool

ALEKSANDR RYAZANTSEV

The Rubin Kazan striker sparked one of the surprise results of the Champions League campaign when he scored against Barcelona with a blistering second-minute shot in the Camp Nou.

MAXIME GONALONS

The Lyon youngster scored his team's winning goal against Liverpool in the Champions League at Anfield – just one year after being told by doctors that they would have to amputate an infected foot.

& VILLAINS

LOUIS VAN GAAL

Under increasing pressure after defeat at home to Bordeaux left German heavyweights Bayern Munich in grave danger of missing out on the Champions League knockout stages.

CALLUM CAMPBELL

The Liverpool fan responsible for Sunderland's infamous beach-ball goal admitted he was physically sick after receiving death threats.

GUTI

The Real Madrid midfield star was dropped from the team to face Getafe after a reported bust-up with coach Manuel Pellegrini.

JOHAN VERBIST & PAUL ALLAERTS

The goal assistant and referee respectively who sent off Brede Hangeland instead of Stephen Kelly in the Fulham v Roma Europa League match, despite both being only yards from the incident.

Mistaken identity...Hangeland (far right) is sent off rather than Kelly (no2)

BLATTERWATCH

Keeping tabs on the FIFA president

WHEN HE WAS elected in 1998, Sepp Blatter said he would run for two terms as FIFA president. Now, two years into his third term, Blatter says he will stand for a fourth term at the FIFA Congress in 2011.

"I need more time," he told Italian sports daily *La Gazzetta dello Sport*. "I hope that in 2011 the FIFA Congress once more has faith in me, otherwise I'll go back to my village."

Interestingly, Blatter announced his intentions via the Italian newspaper rather than the FIFA executive, which met in Brazil last month.

The thoughts of UEFA president Michel Platini and Asian confederation supremo Mohamed Bin Hammam, both seen as potential candidates to succeed Blatter, are not yet known.

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The MLS play-offs began after a regular season that was solid rather than spectacular. More, page 40

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Former international striker Adriano fired Flamengo into contention as the national championship headed for a tense finale. More, page 25

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Heynckes firing up Leverkusen

Veteran coach Jupp Heynckes has kick-started a Bundesliga revival at Bayer Leverkusen. More, page 17

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CSKA sack Ramos

Juande Ramos lasted just six weeks as coach of CSKA Moscow. More, page 87

ITALY
Beckham back in Milan

David Beckham is set to return to Milan on loan in January after playing for Los Angeles Galaxy in the MLS play-offs. More, page 30

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Welcome to the world

The Club World Cup is being held in Abu Dhabi for the first time. More, pages 26 and 90

EGYPT
Ghana triumph in Cairo

The Black Satellites became the first African side to win the Under-20 World Cup after beating Brazil on penalties in the Final. More, page 81

SOUTH AFRICA
Parreira back in charge

Former coach Carlos Alberto Parreira returned to manage Bafana Bafana following the sacking of Joel Santana. More, page 19

HEADLINERS

People in the news...on and off the pitch

Dominic Adiyiah
Sky's the limit for the World Under-20 star

GHANA

ONLY THE MYOPIC would argue that outstanding young striker Dominic Adiyiah was an undeserving choice as player of the tournament at the Under-20 World Cup. The top scorer at Egypt 2009 with eight goals – half his team's tally – Adiyiah was the match winner his side could always depend on; a pacy, powerful and composed finisher who propelled the Black Satellites into title-winning orbit.

Slightly disappointing at this year's African Youth Championship in Rwanda – where he was used principally as an attacking sidekick – Adiyiah was switched by coach Sellas Tetteh to the role of central spearhead for the Egyptian main event...and it worked a treat.

"It did not surprise me to see Dominic in such good form," declared former Ghana boss Claude Le Roy. "Ghanaian football is one of the deepest reservoirs of talent in Africa, perhaps the world, but from a tender age, it was apparent he had something extra, a special ingredient to set him apart from the rest.

"I saw him play a few years ago for the Feyenoord academy side and then with Heart of Lions. He was sensational and I didn't think twice about picking him last year for a national team training camp.

"Adiyiah is much more than a natural finisher with head or either foot. He can play with his back to goal, he's unselfish, mobile and most important of all, he has a great attitude. He's fearless and ambitious. He demonstrated his mental strength with the confident way he took his penalty in the shoot-out in the Final.

"I don't think he will be distracted by all the compliments he's receiving. He is very single-minded. He can see the goals he wants to achieve in the distance and will keep going until he reaches them."

Easier said than done. He may have shone brightly in Egypt and have a number of prestigious European clubs heading for his door bearing gifts, but a most-valuable-player trophy at a youth competition is absolutely no guarantee of long-term top billing.

For every Under-20 star who goes on to greatness – Diego Maradona, Robert Prosinecki and Lionel Messi – there's an Emilio Peixe (Portugal, 1991), Caico (Brazil, 1995) and Nicolas Olivera (Uruguay, 1997) who took the road to nowhere.

Certain pundits believe it is a foregone conclusion Adiyiah will be included in the full Ghana squad for next year's World Cup. However, gifted as he is, nothing could be further from the truth. Black Stars boss Milovan Rajevac is anxious to try Adiyiah out but with Asamoah Gyan, Matthew Amoah, Derek Boateng and Quincy Owusu-Abeyie ahead of him in the front-line hierarchy, he may have to wait a while.

Currently employed by Norwegian side Fredrikstad, who he joined from the Heart of Lions club in Kpandu last year for a paltry £100,000, Adiyiah's next task will be to prove himself in the European mainstream, with Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani claiming: "We have an agreement with Fredrikstad. Now the player needs a work permit to enter Italy and we will deposit the contract on January 1. He will have to pass a medical and then he will be a Milan player."

It all began for Adiyiah in the Ghanaian coastal resort of Gomoa Fetteh, where Dutch club Feyenoord set up a soccer school academy/satellite club back in 1999. Accra-born Adiyiah took up residence there at the age of 10 and was snapped up by top-flight Heart of Lions, scoring 11 goals in the 2006-07 campaign and winning the league's player of the season award. Within weeks he was off to Scandinavia, bought by Fredrikstad.

A decade since they founded their African offshoot, Feyenoord fans are distinctly unhappy that next to no Ghanaian brilliance has come their way. In Dominic Adiyiah, the Rotterdammers look to have missed out yet again.

Nick Bidwell

Pointing the way...now Adiyiah needs to prove his mettle in a top European league

Easy does it...Heynckes is a calmer individual these days

Jupp Heynckes
Veteran coach overseeing Leverkusen revival

GERMANY

JUPP HEYNCKES was nicknamed "Osram" – a well-known brand of light bulb – during his playing days at Borussia Monchengladbach for the way his face instantly turned red when angry. These days he may be close to his pension at 64, but as a top-flight coach Heynckes still glows, having overseen Bayer Leverkusen's emergence as one of the form teams of the season.

For sheer longevity at the top, Heynckes deserves a medal, if not a well-earned rest. A boss for the best part of three decades, he has called the shots in 520 games in the German elite and if he fulfils his present two-year contract, he will become the second longest-serving coach in Bundesliga history behind Otto Rehhagel (824).

You can't keep a good man down. In the wake of disastrous spells in charge of Schalke (2003-04) and his beloved Gladbach (2006-07) – where he starred as a striker in the 1970s and began his coaching odyssey – Heynckes looked ready to be put out to pasture, an inflexible old-school type unsuited to modern football. However, reinvigorated by a two-year break, he leapt spectacularly back into the saddle last spring, identified by Bayern Munich as the safe pair of hands to steady the ship following the sacking of Jurgen Klinsmann.

A sizeable section of opinion in the Bundesliga thought Bayern were gambling by turning to a "yesterday man" whose previous tenure in the Bavarian club's hot-seat ended 18 long years ago. But general manager Uli Hoeness knew better. A long-standing friend of Heynckes, he not only liked his pal's track record – two Bundesliga titles at the Bayern helm in 1989 and 1990, and a Champions League triumph with Real Madrid in 1998 – but also saw the traditionalist as the ideal antidote to the incurably progressive Klinsmann.

To the chagrin of his many critics, Hoeness was proved right. Heynckes' sound grasp of all matters tactical and his uncomplicated approach was just what Bayern needed and it was no coincidence a team which had looked so disjointed and flat suddenly came good under his aegis, winning four out of five games to clinch direct Champions League qualification.

Since his appointment at Leverkusen in June, "Don Jupp" has continued in the same vein – taking a dysfunctional team which went into free-fall in the second half of last season and recreating a harmonious whole. It has not been a new-age transformation built on complicated theory; Heynckes has simply made his new team more consistent, balanced and compact.

Unlike last season, when Bayer poured forward at every opportunity and more often than not forgot to lock the back door, they now play with greater control. They remain a vibrant, attack-conscious side, but are not nearly so naive. All of a sudden, tactical discipline is in vogue and the Leverkusener are twice the team for it.

In keeper Rene Adler, veteran Finland centre-back Sami Hyypia, midfield dynamo Simon Rolfes and striker Stefan Kiessling, Bayer have certainly not lacked individual titans this season. But Heynckes has been the glue to hold it all together, for once adopting a softly-softly man-management style.

The change of mood at the club has been total. While Heynckes' ultra-demanding predecessor Bruno Labbadia had the players muttering mutiny, Jupp has carefully kept his new charges on side and on message.

Heynckes was not always so mindful of big egos. In 1993, during his time at Eintracht Frankfurt, he clashed bitterly with Tony Yeboah, Jay-Jay Okocha and Maurizio Gaudino. Believing the trio had been holding back in training, he ordered them on a long-distance run, only for the would-be rebels to refuse and go on strike, the first instance of Bundesliga players withdrawing their labour. All three were suspended and eventually shipped out.

"I don't get annoyed as I used to," says a far more mellow Heynckes. "I'm not as grim." Nor are Leverkusen.

Nick Bidwell

Alessandro Nesta
Veteran defender back in business for Milan – and the *Azzurri*?

ITALY

WHEN ALESSANDRO Nesta strode forward to score the two late goals with which Milan overcame a 1-0 deficit to beat Chievo it was almost a case of "Alessandro who?"

The 33-year-old central defender has spent too much time on the injury list over the last three years and it had been whispered around Milanello not so long ago that he might never play again.

Now, however, no one dare discount the possibility of Nesta even coming out of international retirement to attend a fourth World Cup finals, with the *Azzurri's* pallid showing at the Confederations Cup in June suggesting a little veteran bite and spirit might be welcome.

Nesta counts 78 appearances for Italy – from his debut in 1996, after starring in a European Under-21 triumph, to his battle-weary retirement two years ago. Had injuries been kinder to him, he might now be rivalling his old partner Fabio Cannavaro up in the late 120s.

Injury incidents have always figured prominently in Nesta's career: he was the Lazio youth player whose tackle wrecked Paul Gascoigne's knee for a second time during the England man's tangled spell in Italy.

His own injuries pulled him up short in the group stages of the 1998 World Cup in France, the 2002 finals in Japan and South Korea, and again in Germany in 2006. He did, of course, pick up a medal in Berlin, but he had surely earned the right to have won it on the pitch rather than sitting helplessly on the bench.

Back at Milan that autumn – he had joined the *Rossoneri* in 2002 – a shoulder injury meant surgery and three months out, though the club demonstrated their faith by signing him to a three-year contract extension in 2007 after he helped anchor the Champions League revenge victory over Liverpool.

However, ongoing minor injuries persuaded him to put an end to his Italy career and concentrate on trying to stay as fit as he could for his club.

"I am so sorry," said Nesta. "Pulling on the national shirt and being in the dressing room has been an honour, but I just can't do it anymore."

Azzurri coach Roberto Donadoni was not impressed, comparing Nesta with a schoolboy looking for an excuse to miss an exam. But Nesta was badly missed at Euro 2008 after injury ruled out Cannavaro and Italy fell in the quarter-finals.

When Marcello Lippi returned to the helm he was not slow in gently pushing open the door to a possible return for Nesta, saying: "All players from 18 to 40 are in my mind. My aim is to start again with the squad I left in 2006, integrating other players, hopefully youngsters."

Any prospects of Nesta thinking again and returning to the national scene were cut short by a back injury which ruled him out for all of last season, bar one game – hence Milan's urgent pursuit of defenders in the transfer market this past summer, with Paolo Maldini also gone.

Ironically, Nesta has finally regained both fitness and form – and maybe even more than that.

As he jokes: "I can even come up looking for goals now that I don't have to stay back and look after the old fellow anymore!"

Keir Radnedge

Carlos Alberto Parreira
Mixed reception as Brazilian returns as World Cup hosts' coach

SOUTH AFRICA

CARLOS ALBERTO PARREIRA has returned to complete the task he started in 2007: build a competitive side for South Africa ahead of their hosting of the 2010 World Cup finals.

But his return has set off a surprisingly strong vitriol from a country who feel the "Brazilian experiment" has failed.

Parreira originally signed a lucrative contract – he earned more in a month than the country's president got annually – to build up the team for the tournament, effectively given three-and-a-half years to achieve an ambitious target.

But Parreira left just short of 18 months into the job when his wife fell ill with cancer. He returned to Rio de Janeiro just when it seemed he had made a breakthrough and there was significant progress being achieved by Bafana Bafana.

His last game in charge was a convincing 3-0 win over Paraguay, who at the time were heading the South American standings in the early stages of the 2010 qualifiers. Joel Santana, recommended by Parriera to succeed him, proved divisive, set in his ways and in the end boxed himself into a corner with a run of poor results.

South African football has always fancied itself to have a touch of Brazilian flair, though in truth the game in the country has suffered from decades of isolation, enforced by apartheid and geography. South African soccer is played at breakneck pace, with few of the subtleties of the modern world game.

A top-class Brazilian coach was seen as the perfect professor to build on the technical abilities of the South African players, and Parreira's record of winning a World Cup and going to another five finals as coach made him the obvious choice.

What South Africans did not realise was that hiring a Brazilian does not mean being taught Samba-style football. Indeed, most Brazilian coaches are defensively minded – particularly Santana, who showed good organisation during June's Confederations Cup on home soil but little attacking ambition. Such was the dissatisfaction with Santana and the back-room staff Parreira left behind that the clarion call for a local coach echoed loudly in the days after Santana was dismissed.

Battle with the sceptics...Parreira

However, the South African FA insist now that Parreira is available again – his wife has recovered well – he is the man to finish off what he started.

Yet the honeymoon is long over and Parreira, who has spoken of his lack of belief in the side's ability, has much to do to win over the critics. But, with a short-term deal, is he really that bothered?

Mark Gleeson

Dave Whelan
Wigan owner takes moral high ground over King

ENGLAND

DAVE WHELAN appeared to be striking the perfect moral pose when he greeted Marlon King's 18-month jail sentence with a high-speed sacking of the troubled striker from Wigan Athletic.

King is a Dulwich-born Jamaica striker who has played consistently across the divisions – mostly lower – since his debut with Barnet in 1998. His latest disgrace was a conviction for sexual assault and causing actual bodily harm, having attacked a woman in a nightclub incident.

Wielding the axe...Whelan

Whelan did not mince his words, saying: "I do not want convicts at Wigan Athletic. Some club will sign him when he gets out, they'll take the risk. But they shouldn't.

"The FA should stop him playing professional football for 18 months after he has served his sentence. They should ask themselves if we want people with criminal records like this lad, especially with the type of crime he has committed over his career. This is not just a one off.

"They should say: 'We've had enough of that.' I can't see him coming back. He is absolutely sacked. We will not tolerate this kind of behaviour. It will be very, very difficult for any club to stick their neck out and take Marlon on.

"A lot of people will say you do something wrong and you get a sentence and when you have completed it you are allowed back in. But I wouldn't allow him.

"We laid out £3million on this lad and we've lost most of that money now. But we have standards that we want to keep to. It is a professional game. I am sure every club in the Premier League would have sacked him like I did."

Jail sentence...King was found guilty of sexual assault

Whelan's apparent certainties were contradicted by King's agent, Tony Finnigan, who was confident the 29-year-old would find a new club after his sentence – assuming it is not overturned on appeal in any case.

Rounds of applause for Whelan were heard from within the game and without. This was a no-nonsense football man speaking; one who was, famously, a full-back with Blackburn Rovers back at the turn of the 1960s who broke a leg in an FA Cup Final and then worked his way up from market stallholder to sportswear retail millionaire.

And yet...King had 13 previous convictions ranging from violence to car theft. Fulham pulled out of signing the player two years ago after they ran a cursory check on his history. Whelan and Wigan had that chance themselves. As it was, King scored only once in 19 games for them and seven in 35 in loan spells with Hull City and Middlesbrough.

Keir Radnedge

Keir Radnedge

Education is the key

Players need to be taught about the game's pitfalls before they are punished

NESTOR Combin once told me: "Estudiantes were the dirtiest team I played against." Then he frowned, paused, and corrected himself: "No, they were as dirty as all the teams I ever played against put together."

Combin, now 68, was born in Argentina but his family were French and he played for France at the 1966 World Cup finals while he was with Lyon. Later he went to Milan where, as an Argentinian exile, he was a particular target for attention when they played Estudiantes de la Plata in the Intercontinental Cup (today's Club World Cup) in 1969.

He ended up with his nose broken because Estudiantes took no prisoners, and three opposition players – on the orders of Argentina's state president – spent the night after the game in police cells for provoking mayhem.

Estudiantes were the most cynical of teams. Every trick – on and off the ball, and behind the referee's back – was employed. If Alf Ramsey thought Argentina had been "animals" at the 1966 World Cup, he knew nothing of big cats. Antonio Rattin and his side were pussycats compared with the Estudiantes team who won the Libertadores Cup three times in a row in the late 1960s.

As South American champions they competed in the Intercontinental Cup: beating Manchester United in 1968, then losing to Milan in 1969 and to Feyenoord in 1970 (when Oscar Malbernat deliberately knocked off Dutch defender Joop Van Daele's glasses and trod them into the turf).

Combin's words floated back into my mind as I sat among 400 delegates at a FIFA Medical Conference listening to an address from Raul Madero.

A "young" 70, tall, white haired, straight backed and distinguished, Madero qualified in the 1970s and was Argentina's national team doctor in the 1980s and early 1990s, then again between 2007 and 2009.

A high-profile mixture of presidents, general secretaries and medical advisers from more than 200 national associations gave Madero rapt attention as he urged upon them the value – for players' short- and long-term health – of proper training routines, effective refereeing and a respect for fair play.

Yet, back in the late 1960s, the same Raul Madero was one of the defensive pillars of...Estudiantes de la Plata.

Wisdom of years

Madero is a prime example of the wisdom of years. I asked him how he reconciled the practice of his playing days with the principles of today.

"At Estudiantes we played football hard. Very hard," said Madero, while making a gesture with his right hand and left arm which left no doubt about what he meant. "But," he added, "in those days, the relationship and respect between the players and the referees was totally different. Nothing like as good as it is today, whatever people say.

"Also, players then didn't have any education in the game. We went out to play and win, and that was it. Later, of course, I – we – learned much more about how the game should be played and the qualities and values which are essential for every player's long-term health. We learned to see things with different eyes."

FIFA president Sepp Blatter is another high-flyer whose understanding of how the game should be played has evolved down the years.

Recalling the days "when I had just a little more hair", Blatter said: "As was normal with most young men I started on the left. Then they realised I could play just as well on the right wing. After that, when I was starting to slow down a little, I became a centre-forward because I could play the ball both to the left and to the right.

"The centre-forward must also be a bit tricky or you will never get through the defence. Centre-forwards in modern football play too much with their back to the goal and don't have the courage to turn. They receive the ball 10 times and give it back to a team-mate accurately every time, so statistically they are the best players on the pitch.

"But centre-forwards in my day would try to turn and go through the defence and we were diving – after all, if someone pulls your leg the tendency is not to stand up but fall down.

"I don't know how many penalties I got for that but I can't talk about it now because my duty as president of FIFA is to stand up for fair play."

Somewhere, down the line and down the years, is the delicate balance between wanting to win and how to win; physical contact and foul play. Madero appreciates it now. So does Blatter.

Another speaker in Zurich was Lars Peterson of the Swedish FA. His response in a formal discussion about "how to prevent contact injuries" appeared to be the simplistic one of cutting out physical contact altogether.

That approach explained precisely why players from different cultures, climates and conditions are so easily irritated at World Cup finals by differing approaches from opponents and referees, from Southeast Asia to South America. One man's push is another man's punch; one man's flick is another man's foul.

These attitudes and styles are

"When I was at Estudiantes we played hard. Very hard. But players then had no education in the game. Later, of course, we learned much more about how it should be played"

Argentina national team doctor Raul Madero

Converted preacher...Madero

Read more from Keir Radnedge at worldsoccer.com

ingrained, and changing them takes decades. Just look at Argentina, where it took many years before the poison so ruthlessly administered by Estudiantes drained out of the country's football psyche.

After all, it was still in evidence at the 1978 World Cup Final when Cesar Luis Menotti's Argentina deliberately came out late for the kick-off after leaving Holland standing around in the River Plate cauldron. And it was Menotti's Argentina who, deliberately, just before kick-off, protested loud and long about the protective cast on Rene Van der Kerkhof's broken wrist.

Eight years later that poison remained in evidence when Diego Maradona thrilled his fellow-countrymen with his "hand of God" goal. Admire his cheek, admire his nerve, but that is all. Then reflect on the Estudiantes legacy: Argentina's manager that day in the Aztec Stadium was former Estudiantes' midfield anchor Carlos Bilardo and the team's doctor was Madero.

Better refereeing? More fair play? Bring it on. But teach today's players the lessons of the common sense of fair play – enforcing them, if necessary, with long suspensions, which are far more effective than fines. By the time they reach their 70s it will be too late. ●

Season with a difference

THIS IS WHAT is known as the "conference season"; the time of year when administrators from all walks of sport – with football to the fore – sponsors and businessmen pay serious money (up to £1,000 a head) to visit London, Paris, Dubai or Monte Carlo to listen to each other talk about, well, money.

This may mean money for sponsorship or direct business, but also for community projects – in other words, those issues we used to describe as "good causes". Once known as charity.

The buzz label is "CSR". Corporate Social Responsibility. Three words which put a fashionable veneer on the business of sponsorship.

The trouble is, most community projects do not attract headlines. Even within football and other sports, people do not know what is being done. Panels of the great and the good frequently bring their organisational strands together but mutual understanding and co-operation still remains minimal.

Johann Olav Koss demonstrated the point at a London conference. Koss won four Olympic speed-skating golds for Norway and now heads Right To Play, which works to rehabilitate child soldiers in Africa.

But Koss used the platform to attack major sports organisations for awarding host rights to the developing world without investing anything further. In his words: "It seems as if it's enough for sports just to take their

Point of attack...Koss

events to places. They should be doing more."

Clearly he was pointing a finger at FIFA. But the facts and figures tell a different story.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has his critics – there is even a website devoted to attacking him over everything from the MasterCard shocker to his car – but Blatter has achieved something very clever. He has built, within FIFA, a transparent system for handing out worldwide development grants. No more old-fashioned brown envelopes, just a vastly enhanced, wide-open system of presidential patronage.

Just for now, never mind the motivation, feel the projects. So far the 386 Goal projects have averaged a cost of around £250,000 each which adds up to around £100m investment in development, mostly in the developing world. A Football For Health programme is targeted on Africa with the aim of bringing up to 60 million children into schools systems by 2015.

Of course, the cynics will query whether all the money finishes up where it was intended. Part of that problem is such programmes are not "sexy" as far as the mainstream media is concerned.

Peter Kenyon, always level-headed in such spheres, has seen the issue from both the commercial and the football side, with Gallaher, Burton and Umbro, then Manchester United and Chelsea.

He says: "We all have to work harder to put across the importance of CSR. It's not getting any easier. All this talk about getting involved with big events like the World Cup and Olympics; what matters to real people is the success of a project dealing, for example, with knife crime in east London – and that doesn't bring in the big headlines."

Did you know that?

Youthful...Malawi (in white) take on Spain at the Under-17 World Cup

FINDINGS FROM THE FIFA MEDICAL CONFERENCE...

● Magnetic resonance (MRI) tests at the Under-17 World Cup can tell if a player is 17 or not. Such tests cost Nigeria 15 players from their prospective squad

● A training survey showed Muslim players do not suffer a drop in energy levels during Ramadan as long as they eat and sleep properly

● Football runs more doping controls annually (30,000) than any other sport with less than 0.1 per cent positive – at a cost of £605,000 per positive test

● According to Jiri Dvorak, FIFA's chief medical officer, "75 per cent of the time the most important reason for a new injury is an old injury"

● FIFA is recommending its Pre-Competition Medical Assessment (including heart checks) for team administrators as well as all players

● Before the African Under-17 qualifying tournament, cardiac checks weeded out no fewer than nine players with potentially serious heart abnormalities

So that's why it hurts...Dvorak

DISPATCHES

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

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Sack race

Atletico Madrid's sacking of Abel Resino and the sorry saga of the search for his replacement exposed the fundamental problems at the heart of the club

Heading for a fall...Luis Perea scores a spectacular own goal as Atletico crash 4-0 to Chelsea in the Champions League

SPAIN

SID LOWE in Madrid

IT WAS MADNESS, even if they did say so themselves. And it was about to get a whole lot madder. In fact, it was about to get frankly surreal. To the shock and surprise of no one at all, Atletico Madrid became the first Spanish club to sack their coach this season when the axe fell on Abel Resino just two months into the season following his side's 4-0 Champions League hammering by Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Down and out... Resino arrives at the club to confirm his departure

But "Atletico sack yet another coach" headlines don't even begin to tell the whole sorry story.

With the team languishing in the relegation zone, unable to beat Cypriot side APOEL at home in the Champions League and slaughtered 5-2 at the Camp Nou, the pressure built on Resino. President Enrique Cerezo complained the media was treating his coach "as if he had killed someone".

Cerezo insisted: "I have absolutely no doubt that Resino continues for the rest of the season. It would be madness to change our coach now."

As those words tumbled from Cerezo's mouth, Resino could have been forgiven for a shiver travelling up his spine. You suspected that the coach would be sacked the moment that Cerezo said he wouldn't be.

This, after all, is the president who, "hurt" by the lack of faith in one of his former coaches, declared: "I don't know how many times I have to tell you: I am absolutely sure that Javier Aguirre will be our coach for the rest of the season." Four days later Aguirre was sacked. The president had said much the same about Cesar Ferrando, Carlos Bianchi and Pepe Murcia.

This time it took slightly longer. Twenty days longer. A late equaliser in Valencia kept Resino in a job. They beat Real Zaragoza and his position was ratified once more. And then came the capitulations – 3-0 in Pamplona and 4-0 in London. Atletico had been truly pathetic. Again. Something had to be done. So they did what they so often do; they sacked the coach.

When Resino arrived at the Vicente Calderon midway through last season, he said things would change. So did the media, and so too did Cerezo.

He was "tougher" than Aguirre, who was dismissed as "too nice" by his president. He would bring the back-line up the pitch and solve their defensive crisis.

He wasn't. He didn't. Things didn't change. Atletico qualified for the Champions League, just as they had done the year before, but they began this season with the worst defensive record in the Spanish top flight, their worst in half a century. The decision to sack Resino was made on the flight on the way back from Luton airport in the early hours of Wednesday night/Thursday morning.

Surreal search

The fun, though, had only just started. Resino was not actually told until the Friday morning. There were two reasons: one, Atletico did not yet have a replacement and, two, no one at the club could get hold of the coach who was not answering his phone. In the meantime, Atletico began a surreal 24-hour search for the man to replace him; one that felt like it should have been accompanied by the theme tune from *The Benny Hill Show*.

First Atletico leaked that the new coach would be Michael Laudrup. But Laudrup – unconvinced by the offer of only a six-month contract that, he

Will the next coach sign in please...Sanchez Flores (left) is greeted by Cerezo

judged, gave him no authority, no stability and little real support – changed his mind.

Atletico asked youth team coach Milinko Pantic if he'd like the job and he said yes. But they still carried on looking anyway. Luis Aragones' name was floated and discussed seriously, as were those of Roberto Mancini and Miroslav Dukic. But attention turned instead to Luciano Spalletti.

A deal seemed to be in place, until Spalletti informed Atletico that they would have to pay Zenit St Petersburg £2.5million as he already had an agreement in place with them for next season. Atletico, already £250m in debt, backed away and instead turned to Quique Sanchez Flores, who, thankfully, agreed a deal.

Even then, it wasn't over. Sanchez Flores couldn't take over until the Sunday, so Resino's assistant, Santi Denia, was called in to be the coach for one game, against Real Mallorca.

In just over 24 hours, nine different men had been in line for the job. Denia's only match saw his side blow a goal lead in the 93rd minute against nine-man Mallorca.

At Sanchez Flores' first training session fans from the hardcore *Frente* ultras group were allowed in to the training ground to show their "support" for the team – which they did in no uncertain terms. His first game was a 1-0 defeat in Bilbao, in which Atletico hit the post three times.

> **"I have absolutely no doubt that Resino continues for the rest of the season. It would be madness to change our coach now"**
>
> *Atletico president Enrique Cerezo delivers the dreaded vote of confidence*

In its slapstick silliness, its desperate bad luck and its bumbling incompetence, it was so typically Atletico. The conclusion was inevitable – maybe it wasn't about the coach at all.

Resino had certainly got things wrong. His defensive approach in particular was shambolic and under his stewardship Atletico even stopped scoring goals, despite boasting the services of Diego Forlan and Sergio Aguero. But the team's problems are far, far deeper than that.

Jesus Gil years

It was not Resino's fault that he managed a squad that does not have a single right-back in it. It was not his fault that the sporting director and the president do not get on. It was not his fault, above all, that Atletico are still suffering from their inheritance from the Jesus Gil years – that president and second largest shareholder Cerezo and the club's chief executive and majority shareholder Miguel Angel Gil Marin (the son of Jesus Gil and his former right-hand man) do not get on. It certainly was not his fault that the constant clashes between the pair have provoked a civil war that has torn the club apart. Or that Gil Marin and Cerezo complete signings independently of each other, will argue over whose turn it is to choose a coach, and feed the players contradictory lines. Or that the club is in debt and embargoed (a percentage of all transfers is immediately taken off them to pay their debts).

While on some scores Resino was certainly guilty, on most he was a victim. Just as were most of the men that went before him – and there were an awful lot of them. Since Atletico won the double in 1996 they have been through 17 "permanent" coaches; since they were prompted back to the first division in 2002 they have bought in over 60 players and spent more money than any side in Spain, outside Real Madrid and Barcelona. And they have won nothing.

Sitting in La Liga's relegation zone and out of Champions League after four group games, having won just one of their 13 games so far, they seem unlikely to win anything this season either. Finish another season empty-handed and the solution is predictable: sack another coach. At least it will be until the men running the club finally realise that may not be the solution at all. ●

Body blow...Forlan feels the pain of defeat in Bilbao

Oldie but goodie...Petkovic celebrates the first of his two goals for Flamengo against Palmeiras

Photo finish

The national championship is heading for a dramatic climax

BRAZIL

TIM VICKERY in Rio de Janeiro

WITH FIVE rounds to go, the Brasileirao looked set for its most dramatic finish since the league format was introduced in 2003 as only goal difference separated local rivals Palmeiras and Sao Paulo on 58 points, with Atletico Mineiro two behind and Flamengo surging into fourth place with 54.

Flamengo have been spearheaded by Adriano, so imperious that he sometimes seems like an adult playing against boys. But a more surprising story than his return to form is that of his main supply line, the 37-year-old Serbian midfielder Dejan Petkovic.

"I've always want to play alongside 'Pet'," says Adriano. "Before he receives the ball he knows which movement I'm going to make."

After not quite making the grade in Spain and Italy, Petkovic has spent much of the last 12 years in Brazil, his time split between six different clubs. He was a Flamengo idol at the start of the decade, but his return this year was initially viewed with widespread suspicion. He was seen as an ex-player, out of action since last November, and the contract Flamengo offered him was interpreted as part of a manoeuvre by the club to reduce the club's debt to the player from his previous spell.

Instead of which, the veteran has been a growing force in the Rio club's rise up the table. Off the bench during June and July, in the starting line-up in August and September, by October Petkovic was one of the outstanding players in the championship.

Usually cutting in from the left of midfield, but also rotating well with support striker Ze Roberto, Petkovic started running the show. His most impressive display came in the 2-0 win away to leaders Palmeiras. He scored both goals – the first with a solo dribble and superb finish, the second straight from a corner. But more than his goals, the defence-splitting passes for Adriano have been especially important. "With him on the field we gain a lot in leadership, creativity and quality," says coach Andrade. "His vision is different class. He can spot things no one else can."

> **"I've always wanted to play with 'Pet'. Before he receives the ball he knows which movement I'm going to make"**
>
> *Adriano sings the praises of Flamengo team-mate Petkovic*

Indian summer

Once on the books of Real Madrid, and with spells at Sevilla, Racing Santander and Venezia behind him, Petkovic's Indian summer speaks both well and badly of the contemporary Brazilian game.

He was never the greatest athlete – for all his crabbed-shouldered quality he was perhaps too slow and one-footed to shine as a playmaker in the top European leagues – but Brazil's physical-preparation specialists appear to have helped him get into excellent shape, with his weight down and his performance potential up.

On the other hand, as Rio journalist Fernando Calazans noted, Petkovic is not only showing how football should be played, he is also showing that many others in the country don't know how. There is a dearth of his kind of player in Brazil today: the midfielder with the clarity and intelligence to not only stand out individually, but to improve the level of those around him.

The plaudits for improving the midfield's defensive work go to Claudio Maldonado, who is back in Brazilian football after a spell in Turkey. Unobtrusive but classy, the Chilean screens the centre-backs effectively – and when that has not worked, keeper Bruno has saved the day. On successive weekends he saved a total of three penalties – both games were won 1-0 – to earn vital points on the way to an outside shot at the title, or more probably a top-four finish and a place in next year's Libertadores. ●

Ready and waiting...the Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium will stage the opening match of the Club World Cup

Welcome to the world

Abu Dhabi's hosting of the Club World Cup is another feather in the cap of the ambitious Gulf state

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

ALEX KUNAWICZ in Abu Dhabi

THE UAE's DESIRE to host the Club World Cup – which it is doing this year and next – needs to be put into a wider sporting context to be fully understood.

It is not just that the Emirates wanted to host one of the world's most prestigious club tournaments, it is that it wanted to make the competition part of a series of high-end sporting events it could lay claim to.

Over the past few years, the country has worked hard to establish itself as a business and tourist hub. This year saw it add a third dimension, with the UAE attempting to position itself as one of the world's premier sporting destinations: a magnet for top-class football, motor sport, golf, and tennis events.

The centrepiece was the Abu Dhabi grand prix on November 1. This was followed by the inaugural Dubai World Championship golf tournament (November 19 to 22), which is the end-of-season climax to the rebranded Race To Dubai, which used to be known as the far-less exciting sounding European Tour Order of Merit.

November also saw Dubai host FIFA's Beach Soccer World Cup – a sport where the hosts are now so good that they actually beat Brazil in Rio de Janeiro this summer.

Pakistan, who are unable to play international cricket in their homeland at present due to security issues, took on New Zealand in a five-match series in Abu Dhabi and Dubai during November.

In January, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal will, for the second year running, play in the invitational Capitala World Tennis Championship in Abu Dhabi.

The northern emirate of Ras al Khaimah was also ready to host the America's Cup race in February, until a New York court ruled in late October that the race had to be held in the southern hemisphere.

Such an array of events opens the UAE to a wide variety of sporting tourists and, perhaps even more importantly, gives the country exposure and prominence to fans

watching around the world. But, despite the wide choice of sports, football is still king in the Emirates.

FIFA awarded the UAE back-to-back Club World Cups in May 2008, with a £3million donation to grass-roots football helping the Emirates beat off competition from Australia and Japan, where the event will return in 2011.

"I am sure that part of our bid made a big difference," admits Mohammed al Mahmood, chief executive of Abu Dhabi Sports Council. "I think it is fair to say it could have made the difference between success and failure."

Before this year, the only FIFA competition to have been held in the UAE was the 2003 World Youth Cup.

"They said then that they wanted a bigger event and this is it," says FIFA president Sepp Blatter. "The executive committee were unanimously in favour of the UAE bid and are very proud to take this competition there."

In the 16 months since the UAE was awarded the Club World Cup, a lot has happened in the world of Emirati football.

On the ownership front, Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed bought Manchester City, while Sulaiman al Fahim managed to buy and sell Portsmouth in a matter of months.

On the pitch, the UAE Under-19 team won the Asian championship for the first time and followed it up by reaching the quarter-finals of the Under-20 World Cup.

And the Under-16s came third in the Asian competition to earn a spot at the Under-17 World Cup in Nigeria.

But while the youngsters have been doing well on foreign fields, back at home Abu Dhabi has been readying itself to host the likes of Barcelona and Estudiantes in the Club World Cup.

> **"We are really impressed with what we have seen of the playing and training facilities"**
>
> *Barcelona board member Albert Perrin*

Ground for enjoyment ...the Zayed Sports City stadium will host five matches, including the Final

Five of the tournament's eight games, including the Final, will be held at Zayed Sports City, with the other three, including the opener between UAE title-holders Al Ahli and Oceania champions Auckland City on December 9, at the Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium.

Both grounds have been improved significantly, with £12m spent on the latter, raising its capacity from 15,000 to 42,000.

Zayed Sports City's stadium will hold 45,000 and has new dressing rooms, hospitality areas and an upgraded royal box.

Both venues will be alcohol-free and have dedicated female-only and family stands.

The grass on both pitches was shipped in from Panama, with seeds being sprayed on to them via hydro-sprigging, a technique which is normally used on golf courses and means those planting the seeds do not have to walk directly on to the area they are treating. The pitches were then put through 15 different tests, ranging from making sure the ball bounces correctly to checking the colour and evenness of the grass.

"We are really impressed by what we have seen today, both in terms of the playing and training facilities, and the tremendous hospitality shown to us by the people of the UAE," said Albert Perrin, a Barcelona board member when his club visited the UAE capital in September to check on the facilities.

"December promises to be an exciting month of football here and we sincerely hope that the next time we leave the UAE, it will be as Club World Cup champions."

Marketing deal

While the absence of an English team will mean less travelling supporters, a considerable number of fans are still expected to make the short trip from Saudi Arabia. Barcelona's presence has been widely welcomed due to their four-year marketing deal with Etisalat, who are the Emirates' biggest telecommunications company.

Special charter flights have also been arranged from Barcelona, while the Emirates is home to around 2,000 Spaniards.

There have been concerns that the matches will be played in half-empty stadiums. Last season, games in the Pro League – the top division in the UAE – averaged less than 2,500 fans, but around 18,000 were at the Mohammed bin Zayed stadium to watch Sheikh Mansour's Al Jazira draw 2-2 with Al Ain in October.

A test event was also due to be held at Zayed Sports City on November 12, with the UAE national team taking on Premier League side Manchester City in a friendly, and organisers are buoyed by the fact that the grand prix and this year's Capitala tennis event were both sold out.

They have made match tickets available that are affordable for almost every section of society, pricing them from £1.65 to £50. The cheapest ticket to watch Barcelona in their semi-final is just £2.50.

"I am 100 per cent confident that we will attract big crowds for all of the matches," added Al Mahmood. "I feel sure the event will be a major success."

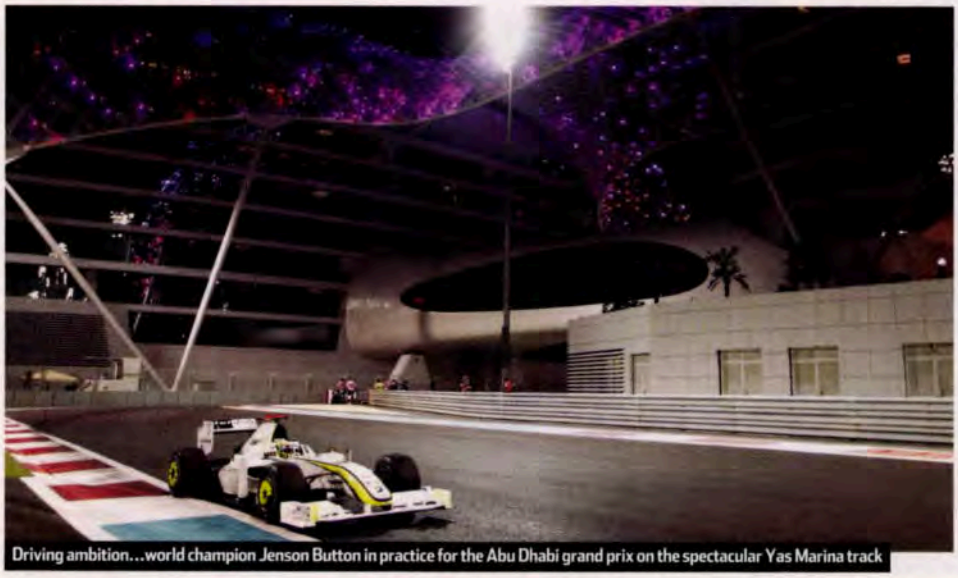
He is also confident that the tournament will not be affected by problems with supporters, who will be entertained outside the stadiums in designated fanzones.

"The reputation of this country is such that we are not regarding security as an issue," he said. "We are providing other ways for them to enjoy themselves."

Mohamed al Rumaithi, president of the UAE Football Association, says of the Club World Cup: "It is a unique opportunity for the people here to be part of an historic international event.

"Some of the biggest names in football will be playing right here in our backyard for the very first time." ●

Alex Kunawicz is sport content editor at The National *in Abu Dhabi*



Driving ambition...world champion Jenson Button in practice for the Abu Dhabi grand prix on the spectacular Yas Marina track

• **Club World Cup preview, page 90**

Diego's dilemma

After the last-gasp World Cup qualification, Maradona must listen to his closest advisors – or risk failure in South Africa

ARGENTINA

REX GOWAR in Buenos Aires

WHEN Diego Maradona was handed the reins of his beloved Argentina team, those prepared to give him a chance of making a success of the job despite his poor coaching curriculum vitae thought he might be able to imbue the side with some of his magic.

But the genius Maradona showed as a player did not guarantee a talent for transmitting his winning ideas to others or forging a successful team in the manner of a Johan Cruyff.

Now, after Argentina's last-gasp ticket to South Africa 2010, Maradona has the time to prepare for an assault on a rare double – achieved only by Franz Beckenbauer – of captaining then coaching his country to World Cup victory.

According to a recent poll, a majority of Argentinians would scoff at the very notion, preferring to see him sacked and someone else take charge. But that will not happen, so their best option is to hope that, as in 1986, an apparently disjointed team once again comes good.

Maradona was slammed for his lewd insults towards a section of the media after qualification was secured in Montevideo and for the apparent disunity in the national team set-up.

His relationship with Carlos Bilardo, technical director of all Argentina's national teams, is poor and he is perceived as refusing to take criticism or even advice. Yet there are some signs matters might improve.

Early in November, Maradona's coaching staff were up for the renewal of their contracts or dismissal – and out went the ineffectual Miguel Angel Lemme, a Bilardo man.

Maradona had been trying almost from day one to get Oscar Ruggeri to work alongside him, but Argentinian Football Association president Julio Grondona has refused to budge on the issue, having had a run-in with the former captain in the past.

However, Maradona brought in another former Argentina defender, Fernando Gamboa, who has impressed since taking charge at struggling Chacarita Juniors in September. Another talked of as a possible assistant is Antonio Mohamed, a former international striker who has steered modest Santa Fe club Colon into contention in the opening championship.

If Maradona is prepared to listen to his assistants and apply their recommendations, Argentina should be able to find ways of bringing the best out of Lionel Messi in a light blue and white jersey, and work on their defence at set-pieces – from which they were badly exposed by Brazil in Rosario in September.

> **"I'm black or white, I'll never be grey in my life"**
>
> *Maradona spells out his philosophy*

Contradictions and extremes

The problems come from the contradictions and extremes in Maradona's life and personality. He said in his attack on journalists at the Centenario in Montevideo after the 1-0 win over Uruguay: "I'm black or white, I'll never be grey in my life."

A friend one day turns into an enemy the next and Maradona, who reacts violently to criticism or when he feels he has been misquoted, needs to be able to delegate – something hard for a man who resolved, or at least tried to resolve, all his problems single-handedly.

He needs also to take on board the opinions of leading player Juan Sebastian Veron, who said Argentina needed to correct many of the mistakes made during this year's qualifiers, and "not bury them under the carpet".

Maradona did not appear entirely happy with Veron's comments right after qualification was secured, with a look that might have expressed his disappointment at someone speaking out of turn as if betraying the sacred intimacy of the squad.

Jorge Rocco, a psychologist who has worked with first division teams, was asked whether the siege mentality Maradona appears to favour to unite his players was a good basis on which to run a team. His answer reflects Veron's comment.

"It is preferable to look inwards, accept mistakes and solve them," Rocco told the sports daily *Ole*. "Group cohesion should be made on more solid bases. This [siege mentality] way, you put the dirt under the carpet." ●

You'll do it my way...Maradona seems unable to delegate or accept criticism

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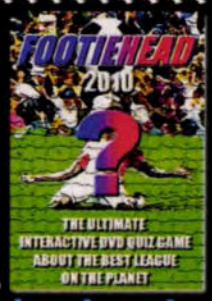

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No rivals

The only team that can stop Inter winning another league title are Inter themselves

ITALY

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

ON THE MORNING after Internazionale had beaten Livorno 2-0 on the first weekend of November, there were those who speculated that, were the *scudetto* a boxing match, the referee would simply stop the fight and declare Inter the winners, fully six months ahead of time.

Normal service would seem to have been reassumed. The idea, expressed in this column last month, that maybe the reigning Italian champions would not quite have things their own way this season already seems dead and buried. Back in their usual dominant position in Serie A, Inter three days later underlined their well-being with their best performance of the last two years in the Champions League, coming from behind to beat Dinamo Kyiv 2-1 in Ukraine.

In the process, Inter jumped from last to first in their group. Are they about to finally perform to their best level in Europe too?

Time will tell, but what seems already clear is that we may have been misled by those early-season flourishes from such as Juventus (away wins against both Lazio and Roma), Lazio (beat Inter to win the pre-season Super Cup) and Sampdoria (one-time league leaders and the only side to beat Inter in Serie A so far this season). Subsequent events have suggested that the reigning champions are indeed the strongest side in the land, both on paper and on the pitch.

After just 11 games, Inter were already seven points clear of their closest rivals, Juventus and Sampdoria. By comparison, on the same Monday morning, Chelsea were just two points clear of Man United in England, Barcelona one ahead of Real Madrid in Spain, Leverkusen a point clear of Hamburg in Germany and Bordeaux two in front of Lyon in France.

This might lead to two fairly obvious conclusions: firstly, Inter have got stronger and, secondly, the others at best have stood still, if in fact they have not become weaker. Former Roma and Lazio coach Zdenek Zeman is just one of many observers of Italian football who argue that Inter are in a class of their own, at least in Italy, saying: "There is one recurring certainty about this Serie A title contest: Inter have no rivals, they can only hurt themselves. They have further strengthened this season, stretching the divide that separates them from their would-be rivals."

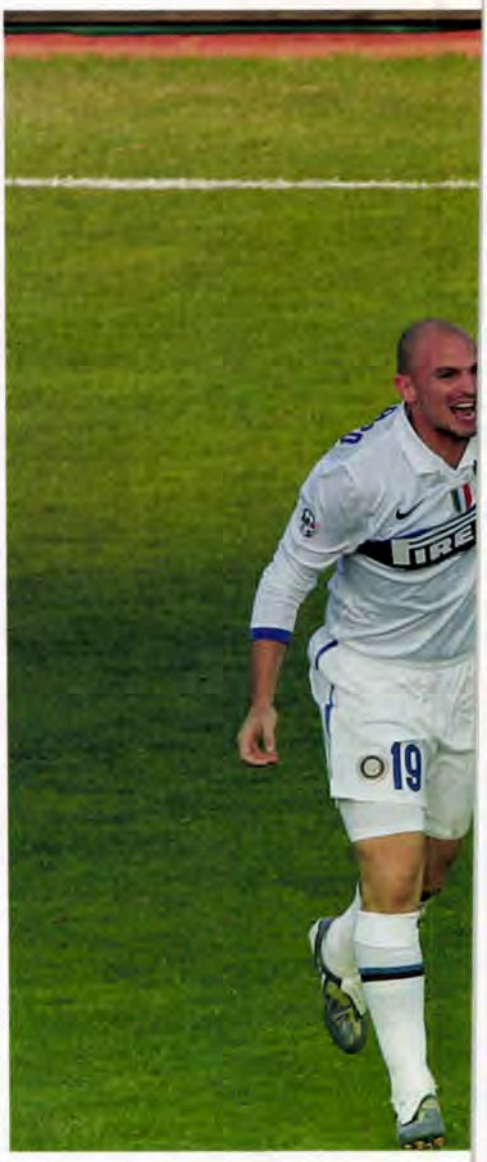
Zeman argues that the arrival of such as Brazil midfielder Thiago Motta, Argentina striker Diego Milito, Wesley Sneijder of Holland and Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o has significantly upgraded a team that was already well ahead of its domestic rivals. On top of that, he points out, Inter even made money out of the Eto'o-Zlatan Ibrahimovic swap with Barcelona. After all, for years, Inter seemed to regularly throw away money in the transfer market.

Platini angers Inter

All of which may have been on the mind of UEFA president Michel Platini when he recently named Inter as one of those heavily indebted clubs that no one would want to buy. This was a remark which prompted a certain outrage up at Appiano Gentile, with Inter spokespersons pointing out that, while it might operate at a loss, the club has no debts thanks to the fact that oil-wealthy owner Massimo Moratti regularly steps in to fill the club coffers.

In the meantime, an indication of the economic power of Inter comes from the life and times of their former coach, Roberto Mancini. In late October, media speculation suggested that Mancini, sacked by Inter at the end of the 2007-08 season despite having lifted his third consecutive league title, had finally "rescinded" his contract with the club – for the handsome severance pay of approximately £7.1million. Mancini, who had a contract with Inter through to 2012 worth an annual £5.3m, is apparently now back on the market with England, France, Russia and Spain all being tipped as possible destinations. This is a story that will surely run and run.

> **There is one certainty about this title contest. Inter have no rivals, they can only hurt themselves**
>
> *Former Lazio and Roma boss Zdenek Zeman on the champions' dominance*



Autumn events, too, served as a reminder to Mancini and others that coaching positions are always likely to become available, especially in Italy. When Siena sacked Marco Giampaolo in late October, he was the sixth Serie A coach to be given the old heave-ho in the first two months of the season. His dismissal follows on from that of Roma's Luciano Spalletti (he actually resigned to be replaced by Claudio Ranieri), Atalanta's Angelo Gregucci (replaced by Antonio Conte), Napoli's Roberto Donadoni (Walter Mazzarri), Bologna's Giuseppe Papadopulo (Franco Colomba) and Livorno's

New, improved Inter...the champions, strengthened by several new signings, celebrate victory over Livorno

Gennaro Ruotolo (Serse Cosmi). When it comes to coaching positions, the swings and roundabouts of hasty change always seem well oiled.

Which is perhaps more than we can say about Francesco Totti's right knee. For the umpteenth time, it seems, the Roma talisman has had to resort to surgery to resolve an ongoing injury problem originally picked up during Roma's 2-1 home win against Napoli at the beginning of October. Roma fans will be hoping he recovers for the first Roman derby of the season in early December. With Roma and Lazio both just above the relegation zone, stand by for sparks to fly.

Sparks flew, too, when England manager Fabio Capello returned to his native land for a sports journalists' congress at the Federal training centre of Coverciano, Florence. In his typically forthright way, Capello prompted a deal of displeasure when he pointed out that Italian football is today often held to ransom by the "Ultra" fans of so many clubs.

"In Italy, the Ultra rule everything, they can do what they like, insult whomsoever they like," Capello suggested. "In Italy, our decline is ever more evident and it will be all the more difficult to attract people back to football. Our stadia need to be much more fan-friendly and, as an Italian, I am sorry to see that we simply do not know how to set about changing things."

Even though many senior football figures immediately attempted to play down Capello's outspoken comments, there is little doubt that Capello did put his finger on one very sore Italian nerve; namely that until Italian clubs become owners of their own grounds, then a major block remains on the road to social and economic progress.

Heading back to Milan ...David Beckham

Not, mind you, that Capello's reservations about the football set-up in his native land stopped him advising England icon David Beckham from moving there last season for a spell with Milan during the American off-season. That proved such a mutually satisfactory arrangement that it will be repeated again this season with Beckham expected to join Milan just before the new year.

Milan get a player who not only sells plenty of shirts but who also adds quality and quantity to the side, while Beckham, of course, gets the perfect off-season preparation for England's World Cup bid in South Africa next season. This is surely the ultimate win-win contract.

Africa's enigma

The Super Eagles have again failed to live up to their great potential

Toil and trouble...Martins threatens the Mozambique goal during the World Cup qualifier in Abuja

NIGERIA

MARK GLEESON

IT WAS DEEP into stoppage time in Abuja in October when substitute Victor Obinna offered Nigeria a precious lifeline. Their World Cup qualifier against Mozambique was heading for a goalless draw and Nigeria were headed out of the 2010 campaign before the striker belted in a last-minute winner.

His dramatic rescue kept the Super Eagles in the race for South Africa, though Tunisia had a two-point lead on them going into the final round of qualifying matches on November 14.

The reality of Nigeria's situation is that they are in perilous danger of missing out on a second successive World Cup and again having to deal with the perplexing question of whether they will ever be able to live up to their potential.

Africa's most populous nation lost the initiative in September when Tunisia held them to a 2-2 draw in Abuja. It was a thrilling game in which the visitors claimed a dramatic equaliser deep into stoppage time, but on the balance of play they deserved a share of the spoils. Had Nigeria held out, they would have turned a two-point deficit in the standings into a one-point lead and been in pole position to go to the World Cup finals.

Nigerian football remains an enigma. The country seemingly has loads of talent and a wide pool of players to choose from at clubs in Europe, but unlike other nations such as Ivory Coast, Ghana and Cameroon lacks a talismanic figure – a Drogba, Essien or Eto'o – around which to rally and build the team.

Nigeria's favourite footballer over the last decades was the brilliantly-gifted but mercurial Austin "Jay-Jay" Okocha, who, to the frustration of his team-mates, always appeared to be playing a parallel game to the one going on around him.

Nwankwo Kanu was the country's other high-profile superstar, who played at Ajax, Internazionale and Arsenal, but also never showed much application for the national team.

Returning home from Europe was always an occasion to catch up with friends and family, and Kanu rarely put in much preparation before internationals. Sometimes he skipped games altogether and his goal return for Nigeria is evidence of the same kind of lethargic attitude that has infuriated fans of the clubs he has played for since his Arsenal days.

Obafemi Martins might have proved a player worth building a team around when he first came to prominence at Inter, but Nigeria found it hard to persuade him to commit to their cause. The Italians pressured him into focusing on his club career, not without good cause either. It is much the same these days for Chelsea's John Obi Mikel – Nigeria's most talented player but also one who is wary of getting sucked into too many international commitments.

> **"Nigeria is blessed with many incompetent people who cannot afford to try to be organised because if they do, their dishonest nature will be clear for all to see"**
>
> *Former Super Eagles star Sunday Oliseh takes a thinly disguised swipe at Nigeria's football federation*

'Incompetent' federation

The malaise in Nigerian football continues to be blamed on an allegedly incompetent federation and the lack of a skilled coach.

"Nigeria is blessed with many incompetent people who can't afford to try to be organised because, if they do, their dishonest nature will be clear for all to see," says former midfield star Sunday Oliseh.

Shaibu Amodu has had nine different spells at the helm of the Super Eagles, most often as a caretaker in between the appointment of others. His last decent spell in charge saw him fired months ahead of the 2002 World Cup finals after Nigeria finished third at the African Nations Cup in Mali, yet they still turn to him when the team is in crisis. This insecurity hardly gives him the air of gravitas needed for the Super Eagles coaching job.

Amodu is a victim of the perennial debate in Nigeria on whether to hire a local or foreign coach. Nigerians all have an opinion on their national side, mostly fervent and passionate. When a foreign coach fails to deliver, the clamour for a local replacement reaches deafening heights. Now the sentiment is back towards bringing in some high-profile foreigner.

Nigeria need a strong personality at the helm in exactly the way that the unsophisticated Dutch coach Clemens Westerhof barged his way through the vagaries of the job and eventually seemed to get the better of the system.

Admittedly he was able to charm high-ranking politicians and use them to force the hand of his employers at the Nigerian Football Association, who frequently skipped off with the players' payments or botched up the arrangements around the team.

But it was a dangerous game and eventually Westerhof had to flee his own team hotel at the end of the 1994 World Cup campaign in the USA.

Even if Amodu secures World Cup qualification, there is no guarantee he will go to South Africa. The cacophony of noise around the Super Eagles rises decibel by decibel, day by day. ●

Solidarity...deposed Honduran president Zelaya and his wife with a shirt signed by the national team captain

Political football

Military rulers are trying to use the country's historic World Cup qualification for their own ends

HONDURAS
MARTIN DEL PALACIO LANGER
in Tegucigalpa

BLISS, PURE BLISS. October 14, 2009, will be remembered for the people of Honduras taking to the streets to celebrate the national team's miraculous qualification for the World Cup in South Africa. Reinaldo Rueda's men won 1-0 in El Salvador, though until the fourth minute of stoppage time in the match between Costa Rica and USA, that scoreline had not been enough. However, a goal by US defender Jonathan Bornstein gave the Americans a draw and Honduras a ticket to the finals.

Until that moment, Honduras had been the CONCACAF region's king of near misses. The first came when defeat by El Salvador in a play-off in Mexico deprived them of a trip to the 1970 World Cup. After two more failures, in 1974 and 1978, Honduras qualified for Spain 1982 and proceeded to shock the world, drawing with the hosts and Northern Ireland, and only losing to Yugoslavia by a controversial penalty.

But they failed to build on that success and became specialists in snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. In 1986 they blew the chance to qualify, losing 1-0 at home to Canada after having 25 shots on goal against one from the Canadians. In 2002, with Korea/Japan in sight, they suffered another 1-0 home defeat, this time by Trinidad & Tobago, who had not previously won away in the qualifiers.

Fast forward to the current campaign and it seemed Honduras were ready for another dose of misery. They needed to defeat USA at home in the penultimate group match to qualify but managed to lose 3-2 after legendary striker Carlos Pavon missed a penalty and an open goal.

That's why Bornstein's goal in Washington unleashed such an explosion of joy thousands of miles away. The Honduran players hugged and cried together on the pitch at Estadio Cuscatlan, where they had just beaten El Salvador, while millions of their countrymen took to the streets.

But there were other, deeper, reasons behind the celebrations. On July 28 this year, state president Manuel Zelaya was toppled by a military coup. Since then, the country has been divided between supporters of the deposed president and those backing Roberto Micheletti, the leader installed by the army.

In recent months, Hondurans have had to endure the suspension of their individual liberties and the introduction of martial law. The country has become an international pariah since the new government is not recognised by any international body. In this atmosphere of extreme tension, the only thing capable of uniting the people has been the national team. World Cup qualification was the country's first good news in ages.

"Our victory will help peace return to Honduras and make people happy after months of tension. Thank God the people can celebrate today. Today all of us are Hondurans," said Rueda, the team's Colombian coach.

The celebrations in the streets proved him right. "We are all here, today, nobody has been left out. The right, the left, the rebels, the Zelayistas. Today there are no rivalries, viva Honduras!" tearfully claimed Ricardo Martinez, one of the young fans who had filled the streets of San Pedro Sula.

However, as often happens in such cases, politicians tried to exploit the sporting triumph of *La Bicolor*.

"We greatly appreciate the *gringos* [Americans] for helping us get to the World Cup. They took away our visa, but now they gave it back to us," Micheletti said, referring to the American embargo on his government. His opponents, meanwhile, marched with the slogan "Honduras to South Africa and Zelaya to the Presidency".

Next morning, the players paraded through the streets of the capital, Tegucigalpa, on an open-top bus, among them Tottenham midfielder Wilson Palacios, who was expected back in London. Micheletti had ordered that "all the heroes had to be in the parade" – an order the player chose not to refuse.

The bus was diverted to pass in front of the presidential palace where Micheletti waited to be photographed with the players. "We had no clue we were going there," said defender Danilo Turcios. "We thought we were going to church." Meanwhile, Flor Guevara, mother of team captain Amado Guevara and fervent follower of Zelaya, gave her son's shirt to the deposed leader, who was immediately photographed wearing it.

But to the bulk of the population, the World Cup appears to be much more important than the political situation. Oscar Salgado, a respected Honduran coach, said: "If you ask 10 people if they prefer to talk about football or politics, nine of them will say football. Going to South Africa has almost made us forget our political problems." ●

> **"Micheletti had ordered that 'all the heroes had to be in the parade' – an order Wilson Palacios chose not to refuse"**

Overtones...a soldier patrols the streets of Tegucigalpa as fans celebrate Honduras' World Cup bonanza

Tale of two territories

While football is slowly dying in Gaza, it is thriving on the West Bank

PALESTINE

JAMES MONTAGUE in Gaza City and Ramallah

RIBHI SAMMOUR scrawled his instructions in exaggerated flourishes on the faded green chalkboard that hung from the wall of the Palestine Stadium's decrepit dressing room. The coach of Al Shate Sporting Club had gathered his players, all sitting in nervous silence, for one last briefing before the biggest match of the season would decide who would be Gaza's undisputed champion.

They had good reason to be nervous and for Sammour to be especially exacting about his tactics for the big match. For one, their opponents, Al Salah, a new team aligned with Hamas, were an almost unknown quantity and the match was to be watched, if rumours were to be believed, by Hamas' disputed prime minister, and one of Israel's most hated opponents, Ismail Haniyeh.

Equally as important was the weight of expectation. Al Shate, a mixed team of Fatah and Hamas members hailing from the 80,000 strong Al Shate refugee camp, and Gaza's oldest and most popular team, had not won any silverware in almost a quarter of a century. But the most recent impediment to breaking their poor run wasn't the lack of talent or even motivation. There simply hadn't been any other teams to play against.

Football has slowly been dying in Gaza. War, instability and an Israeli siege has brought Gazan society to the brink of collapse. Its football league managed to survive even the darkest of days until, finally, it was cancelled after Hamas violently overran the Gaza Strip in 2007, creating a seemingly intractable schism between the militant Islamic fundamentalist force and Fatah, the party of Yasser Arafat and its more secular political rival.

It wasn't just the political and economic apparatus they seized: they also forcibly took over Gaza's top football clubs, angering the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Football Association [PFA] based in the West Bank. Like in almost every area of Palestinian society, football has been paralysed by the internal conflict, leaving the fans, players and senior politicians angry. Now all that's left is a hastily arranged cup, branded as a so-called "dialogue and tolerance" cup, organised by the clubs themselves, and resentment at the politicians who have tried to control the sport for their own ends.

"We have no championship and we haven't won any trophies since 1983," Sammour explained after he had directed his players on to the pitch. "Hamas and the Fatah government in Ramallah do not give us the chance to play, so the 16 teams got together and we were given some money by the UNDP [United Nations Development Programme] instead."

Sammour strode into the unseasonably warm, early autumn afternoon to a deafening crescendo of cheers and drums. With little to do and even less to get excited about in Gaza, 5,000 hyperactive fans had made the journey to the stadium in Gaza City, the blue and yellow of Al Shate dominating the terraces. In front of them stood camouflaged members of Hamas' security forces armed with machine guns, ready for any crowd disturbance. In the confusion, only the players heard the referee blow to start the match.

> **"Hamas and the Fatah government in Ramallah do not give us the chance to play"**
>
> *Ribhi Sammour, coach of Gaza club Al Shate*

Call to arms...Hamas security forces were a menacing presence at the match

This is your chance to be heroes...Sammour spells it out to his Al

How different things were a year ago. October 26 marked the one-year anniversary of Palestine's first home international, against Jordan, in the purpose-built Faisal Al Husseini Stadium on the outskirts of East Jerusalem, when 15,000 fans turned up to watch their team draw 1-1 in a hugely symbolic match. Hopes were high that it would usher in, if not a

rs before their clash with Al Salah

new era of Palestinian football, then at least a normalisation of a game scarred by political infighting, Israeli movement restrictions and poor results. But in Gaza, the civil conflict between Hamas and Fatah, and the subsequent Israeli war, has shattered all that.

Last-minute calls

Ibrahim Abu Salim, vice-president of the PFA and the man in charge of football in Gaza, made some last-minute phone calls from his office on the morning of the match. "We as sports people want to remove sport from politics, but politicians on both sides, Hamas and Fatah, play on this, they try to make politics come into sport," says Salim.

"The main problem lies with Hamas. When Hamas hands back the clubs to their legal board of directors, sport will be running again in Gaza as in the West Bank."

More precisely, it is the military wing of Hamas that has so far refused to hand back the clubs to their rightful owners. Salim adds: "The political wing wants this to return the clubs to their legal owners [but] they [Hamas' military wing] want to be within the Fatah clubs, to have control and channel the minds, the thinking, of the youth."

Football holds a powerful place in Palestinian hearts; partly to do with the game's ubiquity, partly to do with the fact that FIFA is one of the few truly international bodies that recognises a Palestinian entity. In the slow process towards self-determination, the Palestinian leadership realised that to be a proper nation, you needed a proper national football team.

So when FIFA controversially recognised Palestine in 1998, it offered an opportunity to publicise and win concessions for the Palestinian cause in a way that political channels had failed to do. The dream was to reach the World Cup finals in Germany in 2006, a dream destroyed largely by Israeli movement restrictions.

Al Shate's captain Hamada Shbair used to be a regular international, but not any more. Since Israel's war in Gaza, no players based in the strip have been allowed to leave. Up until

then, Gaza's most talented players had been poached by the West Bank league, famed as it is for producing the best footballers. At least 50 managed to make it to the West Bank and 14 now turn out for the national team.

But Shbair has remained, angry that his career has been put on hold due to internal and external conflict. "As a national team player I've had big difficulties in playing because of the siege," he says. The last time he was allowed to leave was for a tournament more than a year ago. "I can't play outside, to be the member of another team. I was offered chances in Jordan and Egypt, but I'm still here."

Ramallah like Las Vegas

But if football is dying in Gaza, it's thriving in the West Bank. The comparison between Gaza City and Ramallah is stark. The former has an abundance of three things: bullet holes, burning rubbish and claustrophobic, manic children scarred by the horrors of war. It's an isolated enclave regressing on every measurement from child mortality rates to employment. Everything that lines a Gazan shopkeeper's sparse shelves, along with the cars and motorbikes that bump along its unpaved and pockmarked streets, has to be smuggled in, piece by piece, through the Hamas-controlled tunnels that stretch into Egypt.

In comparison, Ramallah looks like Las Vegas. Brand new, alien-looking shopping malls announce their arrival like visitors from the future. Basic foodstuffs in Gaza are scarce; in Ramallah a sign stretches across one road proclaiming the arrival of the new Nintendo Wii, back in stock and yours for just 1,690 shekels (£272).

Jibril Al Rajoub's private office is a large villa in a quiet suburb of Ramallah, the colour of Jerusalem's famous sandstone. He's a busy man these days. The president of the PFA has arguably overseen the most successful period in domestic football in the West Bank's history. The former national security advisor to Yasser Arafat, who once spent time in an Israeli jail for throwing a grenade at an army checkpoint before being deported to Lebanon, has also just been elected to the Fatah Central Committee, making him one of the most powerful political figures in the West Bank.

He's known for his fearsome ability to bash heads together to reach agreement, and was the driving force behind securing Palestine's own home stadium and for launching a now thriving West Bank league. "Getting the league started here was not easy but we have 15,000 to 20,000 coming now to games from the north, the south, from areas that are difficult to travel from," says Rajoub.

The blame for the failure of Gazan football to progress, he insists, lies with Hamas. "In the West Bank we have two members of Hamas on the board. We have teams for Hamas, the PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine]," he says. "There is a wall here between politics and factionalism in sport. I think the same should happen in Gaza."

Fierce challenges

Back at the Gaza cup final, it was anything but an exhibition in dialogue and tolerance. As Hamas' forces prowled the touchline, fierce challenges flew in as both sides desperately sought a breakthrough. The only time any unity was displayed was during half-time, when the press, security forces, players and officials lined up, 50 strong, to pray together

We're watching you...camouflaged security men keep an eye out for signs of trouble in the Palestine Stadium

The Gaza Strip and the West Bank are the two Palestinian territories that have been occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War. Gaza is under the political control of Hamas, who won civil parliamentary Palestinian Authority elections in 2006 and took over de facto government in the Gaza Strip from the Palestinian Authority in July 2007. The West Bank is controlled partly by the Palestinian Authority and partly by Israel.

on the pitch in front of their cameras, guns and boots.

By the time Al Shate scored in the 90th minute, the entire bench was on the pitch celebrating their unassailable lead. The referee had a brief stab at enforcing injury time, before giving up, awarding a 2-0 victory to Al Shate and trudging back to his changing room.

Now all eyes were on the small selection of dignitaries in the stand. The increasingly fraught armed guards gave a hint that someone important had arrived. Ismail Haniyeh beamed in his camel-coloured jacket as he took to the pitch and climbed the hastily constructed podium that had been dragged onto the pitch.

Haniyeh himself had been a tough tackling defender for Al Shate, where he grew up a few metres from the football club. Knowing Haniyeh's love of the game, Shbair took the trophy before bravely using his platform to beg for the return of the Gaza football league.

"I told him: 'You used to be a player, please solve this problem of the players quickly,'" Shbair said afterwards. "He replied: 'I hope so, Insha'Allah.'"

Haniyeh's appearance was fleeting. Al Shate's fans, still in the stadium to witness their rare piece of silverware, started to let off fireworks. The Prime Minister's twitchy, stern-faced personal security men, dressed in all black with black baseball caps, were acutely aware of the potential dangers. After all, the Hamas politician had been targeted for assassination by Israel and, he claims, Fatah in the past. Taking no risks, Haniyeh was bundled, still waving, into the back of a waiting limousine, past the lines of celebrating fans, seconds after he had handed out the last medal.

It was the last time Shbair saw the cup he had just won. It would later emerge, outside the ground, in the hands of a yellow and blue mob, who proudly chanted as the cup was held at the apex of tenuous human pyramid. Thousands of fans rolled down the dusty path towards the Mediterranean, before they, and their cup, disappeared, in to the Al Shate refugee camp, on a wave of adulation.

Shbair didn't mind too much. "There is not a lot to be happy about here," he said with a shrug. "The Beach Camp is very crowded, there are maybe 80,000 refugees. The Al Shate team wanted to make the people happy after the war, the martyrs and the siege, and we managed that."

For a rare, precious few moments, the reality of life in Gaza melted into the background. Al Shate were champions of Gaza. When, or even if, they get the chance to defend their title is another question entirely. ●

Leader...Palestine's captain Thaljieh (red) in action against Jordan

"I told him: 'You used to be a player; please solve this problem of the players quickly.' He replied: 'I hope so, Insha'Allah'"

Al Shate captain Hamada Shbair pleads with Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniyeh to restore the Gaza league

From the heart...winning skipper Shbair makes his plea to Haniyeh

Hijabs for goalposts

THE DISPARITY between the two territories was no more evident than a week after the Gaza cup, when Palestinian FA president Jibril Al Rajoub unveiled his latest success. In the shadow of the grey separation barrier, the Faisal Al Husseini Stadium in East Jerusalem was again filled, this time with the high-pitched screams of 10,000 women.

Exactly a year after the men's team marked Palestine's first home game, the women's national team kicked off their debut home match, again against Jordan. The world's press descended to witness the sight of a stadium of women, most wearing white hijabs, cheer on a team that has had to fight social conservatism across the West Bank and Gaza to get a game.

Three years ago, when I met the team at their base in Bethlehem University, they practised on a concrete handball court. Many had been refused permission to play by their families. Now the team stepped out into a packed new home, one stand full of men, with thousands more locked outside.

"It is still difficult sometimes," admitted captain Honey Thaljieh, basking in the crowd's adulation following an unexpected 2-2 draw. "But this has broken all the rules for women here. This was a big event to get both women and men together. In a way, today was like a marriage between the Palestinians."

Yet movement restrictions meant none of the players in the squad lived in Gaza. And besides, Hamas frowns on women playing the game. "Women don't play football here anymore, they only play in their bedrooms and in their dreams," sighed a Palestinian FA official.

James Montague

Mystery tour...(left to right) Ze Soares, Milanov and Rabeh, plus Tasevski (below), were all lured abroad

The Kazan affair

How could Levski Sofia be conned into sending four of their best players to Russia on the eve of a vital derby game?

BULGARIA

RUMEN PAYTASHEV in Sofia

FOR MANY years people have known that anything is possible in Bulgarian football. But, even so, the events preceding September's derby between Sofia rivals Levski and CSKA surpassed all that had gone before.

The day before reigning champions Levski were due to play away to league leaders CSKA, four of their players flew to Moscow to sign for last year's Russian title winners, Rubin Kazan.

Bulgaria right-back Zhivko Milanov, Morocco central defender Youssef Rabeh, Macedonia midfielder Darko Tasevski and Brazilian winger Ze Soares were met in the Russian capital by a "representative" from Rubin, who accompanied them to the Sheraton hotel where they passed medicals. However, the next day the supposed transfers failed to materialise and the four flew home, arriving back in Sofia too late to take part in a game which CSKA won 2-0.

Not surprisingly, several questions were raised on their return to Levski.

For example, how could it be that, several rounds before the end of the Russian championship, Rubin – once again top of the table – needed four players from a Levski side hardly setting the Bulgarian top flight alight?

How exactly would it have been possible for such a deal to go through when everyone knows the transfer window is closed?

And how could a professional club and its president Todor Batkov, a well-known lawyer, be seemingly so easily conned into sending four of its best players abroad on the eve of one of its biggest games of the season?

"I can't explain this," admitted Batkov. "I didn't meet any representatives beforehand or receive an official confirmation from Rubin's president. Maybe this was a very well-executed scam. Seven people [from Levski] were met with expensive Mercedes cars and accommodated in a very expensive hotel.

"I did have doubts and my plan was, if there was any problem, for the four players to return to Sofia before the match with CSKA. I checked UEFA's rules [on transfer windows] and felt we had a right for extraordinary transfers [said to be because of swine flu!]. For all four players the price was to be 5million euros (£4.47m) and the Russians told me that the money was in Sofia in a concrete bank; even in a concrete safe.

"Their representatives met each of the players and I have given names, descriptions, photos and phone numbers to Interpol. Maybe this whole thing is an attack against Levski, or me. "I was threatened over the phone by a Russian who advised me to stop the investigation."

> **"Maybe this was a very well-executed scam. I have given names, descriptions, and phone numbers to Interpol"**
>
> *Levski president Todor Batkov*

Batkov was later quizzed by police over the so-called Kazan Affair. It transpired that, in order to set up the transfer, he had deposited €200,000 (£179,000) with a man called Artur Oganesyan – a name that turned out to be false. Batkov himself has also been accused of betting €1m (£895,000) on CSKA to beat Levski, while he in turn has pointed the finger at Dimitar Borissov and Ivo Ivanov – the owners of CSKA – adding Russia's security services were already investigating the Europa League fourth qualifying round game in which CSKA won 2-1 away to Dinamo Moscow.

Tempestuous relationship

There were also rumours that major Levski shareholder Mickael Chernoy, who is very close to the bosses of Rubin Kazan and has a tempestuous relationship with Batkov, may have been involved in an attempt to drive the share price down ahead of a bid to buy the club.

There is no doubt that the fax inviting the four players was authentic and sent from Rubin Kazan's offices. Yet Mircho Dimitrov, a Bulgarian football agent who has worked in Russia for many years, said: "I spoke with the executive director of the club and with the coach of Rubin, Gurban Berdiyev. They said: 'We don't know anything. We don't want players from Levski because we don't need them.'"

Events also took their toll on the pitch, where Levski went eight games without a win, including three consecutive defeats in the league and three in the group stage of the Europa League. And in six of those eight games they didn't even manage a single goal.

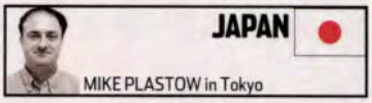
It all became too much for Serbian coach Ratko Dostanic, who was replaced by sporting director Georgi Ivanov after a shock 1-0 home defeat by Beroe. Levski have now changed coach five times in 18 months and fans have called for Batkov's head.

So, who is the real guilty party in the Kazan Affair? Is it Batkov? Chernoy? The bosses of CSKA Sofia? People at Rubin Kazan? The mysterious "Artur Oganesyan"? Maybe it was all of them; perhaps it was the work of someone else we don't yet know about.

Whoever is responsible, it still does not excuse Batkov from falling for the ruse. As one of their supporters put it, "he has made Levski look like the idiots of Europe". ●

Home-grown goals

Okazaki leads the way as Japanese strikers are back on target



JAPAN

MIKE PLASTOW in Tokyo

SHINJI OKAZAKI has been busy giving the lie to the myth that Japanese strikers do not score. His hat-tricks for Japan against Hong Kong and Togo in October brought his national-team tally to 14 goals in 18 games since earning his first cap against the UAE in October last year.

Okazaki had to wait for his fifth cap, against Yemen in January, to net his first international goal but then the goal rush began: two against Finland in February, two against Chile, one each against Belgium and Uzbekistan in June, one against Ghana in September and then those two hat-tricks in October.

Okazaki is a clever player, a constant runner who finds the gap and pops up where least expected to deftly touch, drive or nod in the goals. He could almost be accused of wastefulness, but only because he gets into position so often that he has to miss quite a few. He has been ever present since his debut except for the Scotland match – when Takeshi Okada rested his top players – and is now one of the safest bets on the planet to play in South Africa next year.

The 23-year-old joined Shimizu S-Pulse from high school and played at the Beijing Olympics, but was slow to make his mark in the J.League. Then something just clicked. The floodgates opened from August last year with eight in Shimizu's last 13 league games of the season. So far, 2009 has been his annus mirabilis.

Shimizu acquired big Norwegian striker Frode Johnsen at the start of the season and if the partnership started slowly in March it briefly lifted Shimizu to the top of the table in October for the first time in a decade. Okazaki is fourth in the scoring charts with 14 goals, while Johnsen has nine.

It has been a long time since Japan had a high-scoring striker. In fact, midfielder Shunsuke Nakamura and defender Yuji Nakazawa are the top scorers in the current national squad with 23 and 17 goals apiece.

I'm on a roll...Okazaki beats Togo keeper Kodjovi Obilale on his way to a hat-trick in his country's 5-0 win

It has also been a long time since the J.League had a Japanese top scorer; the last was Naohiro Takahara in 2002. Brazilians have won the prize every season since then. Right now, though, Ryoichi Maeda of Jubilo Iwata is top with 18 goals and there are three Japanese in the top four. Maeda has recently returned to the national team and is also well in the running for a place in South Africa.

Superb partnerships

Has Japan found a new proclivity for scoring? The national team has been belting them in this year against Finland (5-1), Chile (4-0), Belgium (4-0), Ghana (4-3), Hong Kong (6-0) and Togo (5-0) – taking a few carefully selected results! Japanese players are also featuring in some superb partnerships in the J.League.

Besides Okazaki and Johnsen at Shimizu, there is Maeda and Lee Keun-ho at Iwata, Shinzo Koroki and Marquinhos at Kashima Antlers, and Keiji Tamada and Josh Kennedy at Nagoya Grampus. Takayuki Morimoto, 21, who plays his club football in Italy with Catania, also looked very much the part in netting his first goal for Japan against Togo.

> "Okazaki was slow to make his mark in the J.League – then something just clicked"

Granted, those J.League scoring rankings are misleading because of the Brazilians who have since moved on. Davi of Nagoya Grampus was top with 10 goals when he left for Umm-Salal of Qatar, and Leandro of Gamba Osaka led with 11 when signed by Qatari side Al Sadd.

And it is of course, still possible that a Brazilian will wind up top scorer again this year. The prime candidate is Kawasaki Frontale's Juninho, league top scorer in 2007 and currently second in the charts with 16 goals. Juninho has established a superb partnership with North Korea striker Jong Tea-se. Add in Renatinho and Kawasaki may be battling towards their first title with three non-Japanese strikers.

All these factors aside, however, eyes are firmly fixed on the home-grown forwards who have started to make their mark again, and none more than Okazaki. South Africa is going to be a major test for the player who suddenly just can't stop scoring. ●

Must try harder

The 2009 regular MLS season was satisfactory without being spectacular

PAUL GARDNER in New York

IT WAS A REASONABLY satisfactory regular season for MLS and, as matters drew to a close, there was good reason for some smiles from the MLS executives because the play-off system showed itself to be working rather well.

Play-offs have not exactly been wildly popular with many fans – mostly with those who think MLS should slavishly copy the way that things are done in Europe and use the regular season standings to crown a champion. Further, those critical fans insist MLS should have a promotion and relegation system.

When MLS started in 1996, with only 10 teams, it did seem rather ridiculous to have an eight-team play-off structure as it meant playing a whole season to eliminate just two teams. But MLS now boasts 15 clubs, so the play-offs have much more meaning. The first and second placed teams in the Eastern and Western Divisions get automatic play-off berths, leaving the other 11 to battle it out for the remaining four slots.

The way it went this year – with the last berth not being decided until the season's final game – could hardly have been better or more suspenseful. The seven clubs locked out of the play-offs have suffered a sort of relegation, and they fought like crazy to avoid it, creating a rousing end to the regular season. But they're not relegated to the abyss, with minimal hopes of returning to the fray in the near future and the very real possibility of financial disaster. They are secure in MLS; they'll be back next season. So really, who needs promotion and relegation?

As the perfect example of that, take New York Red Bulls. Last season's losing finalists, they have had an appalling 2009 season, posting the worst record in the league. While the team have been losing game after game, their owners – Red Bull GmbH, the Austrian company that produces and markets the energy drink – have been building a new stadium in Harrison, New Jersey. This medium-sized gem of a stadium, seating 25,000, will be ready for next season.

Would that stadium ever have got built if the Red Bull people had felt (as they would have done, for sure) that their team was destined for relegation, and that they could sink even further into the inferior leagues, playing against teams no one has ever heard of?

No, it would not. In fact, Red Bull would not have bothered even to invest in MLS. Nor, no doubt would most of the other investors. The absence of the promotion/relegation set-up is not simply perverse Americanism on the part of MLS; it is a matter of life and death.

Those who criticise it have simply not taken the bother to consider the special requirements of the American scene. The same applies to those who keep going on about the fact that the MLS season is in the summer, when they believe it should be, like other northern-hemisphere seasons, in the autumn and winter.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter piped up on this matter, implying that American soccer will be taken seriously only when it switches its season. It was good to note that USSF president Sunil Gulati shot that idea down in straightforward fashion, responding: "I told him that Chicago is not London in January. Chicago is Moscow in January."

Seattle success

Surely the most pleasing part of the 2009 MLS season was the astonishing birth and immediate success of the new franchise, Seattle Sounders. With an average crowd of over 30,000, the expansion-club Sounders were virtually out of sight in first place of the attendance table – behind them came Los Angeles Galaxy, with just over 20,000.

The Seattle success story came to a wonderful climax in the final home game: a winner-takes-all clash for both Seattle and opponents Dallas. Victory meant a play-off berth; the loser was eliminated. Playing before a league-record crowd of 30,943 in Qwest Field stadium, Sounders came from behind for a 2-1 victory.

> **"The league seems to be hitting a point where fans are growing more demanding, particularly over the level of play. More quality is needed"**

Seattle thus joined the other seven play-off contenders – a group that gave evidence of what many consider another MLS strength (and indeed, of American pro sport in general): there was no clear favourite.

Decades ago a baseball journalist, analysing the two teams that had reached the world series, thought they were both pretty poor, and announced: "I don't think either team can win it." MLS 2009 looks like the opposite of that – all eight play-off teams are in with a chance, even David Beckham's Los Angeles Galaxy, who coach Bruce Arena has moved from the what-a-joke into the difficult-to-beat category, but without

Sleepless in Seattle...Fredy Montero latches on to a cross as MLS success club Sounders come from behind to beat Dallas and reach the play-offs

the flair that might be expected from a team containing Landon Donovan and Beckham, two of the league's outstanding attacking players.

All of this definitely comes under the heading of "satisfactory" for commissioner Don Garber and his league. But of course there's some bad news. Attendances, for a start. Overall, they dropped by 2.6 per cent. And, obviously, that figure could have been substantially worse. Without Seattle's healthy figures, the drop-off would have been a very worrying 9 per cent.

The league seems to be hitting a point where the fans are getting more demanding – in particular over the level of play. More quality is needed. It cannot be just David Beckham. A wider spread of top talent is required and a better quality of coaching.

But the appointment of coaches is dangerously haphazard. The choices are often made by general managers who have no experience of soccer at all. Such was the case in Colorado, where Rapids chose as their coach for the 2009 season a totally inexperienced Briton, Gary Smith. The result was a dull team that failed to make the play-offs.

As for the level of play, that is always something that is impossible to measure, but the sharp falling-off in attendances must be looked at here. It should be combined with another incontrovertible stat: 2009 was the worst season in MLS history for goalscoring. The figure was 2.54 per game, beating the previous lowest figure of 2.62 in 2006.

It is not unreasonable to assume that the supporters are looking for something a bit more exciting than defensive stalemates. But they are unlikely to get it. In six of its first seven years, MLS managed an average of over three goals per game. That seemed like good news for those looking for a lively attacking game. But for others it was merely a sign of MLS' immaturity. To those critics, the league's lower scoring rate is actually a good sign, showing that it is now more in line with the rest of the world.

A satisfactory season, then, is not good enough for MLS. As a new sport, still trying to make an impact, it needs something better each season. In 2010, it is possible that the excitement created by the opening of the Red Bull Arena will create some of that. But aiming for a higher, and a more entertaining, level of play seems to be the only answer for regular improvement each year. ●

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Up Pohnpei

Just organising competitive matches is a struggle in Micronesia, a region where rugby and Aussie Rules dominate

PACIFIC ISLANDS

STEVE MENARY

THE TINY ISLANDS scattered across the Pacific Ocean represent football's last frontier. Take Nauru, which – at just 8.1 square miles – is the world's smallest island nation. The game was first introduced to Nauru in the 1960s by migrant workers from the neighbouring islands of Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands who came to mine phosphate. At one point, half-a-dozen sides played in a thriving league, but the mining boom also brought Australians, who established Australian Rules football.

Today, with the phosphate gone, Nauru is broke. Crowds of several hundred watch games of Aussie Rules, but organized football has fallen apart and Nauru's chances of ever playing football at the Pacific Games, the main regional competition, are remote.

Rayong Itsimaera, Nauru's minister for sport, says: "We hope to see Nauru become a regular member of the FIFA family, but the main obstacles are no qualified personnel to organise training programs at junior and senior level, and changing people's interest from other popular sports."

Paul Watson found a similarly bleak situation when, earlier this year, the young Englishman moved to Pohnpei, one of four islands that form the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The Micronesians had made their Pacific Games debut in 2003 in Fiji, where their best result was a 7-0 thumping from Tonga. The other games were lost 10-0 to Papua New Guinea, 17-0 to Tahiti and 18-0 to New Caledonia.

"You've got to expect some beatings to start with, but mentally the islanders do not like it," says Watson.

The 2011 Pacific Games in New Caledonia is Watson's aim but he needs players from the other three islands in the FSM – and that's not exactly easy. "It's a two-hour flight costing £400 just to bring a player over for a trial from Yap [the nearest island]," he shrugs.

Champions...Island Pitbulls (in green) beat International FC in Pohnpei's Liberation Day Games Final this year

Yawning distances between islands is the reason the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) suggested that Micronesia might prefer to join the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), whose members include nearer neighbours such as Guam.

Eleven full members

Australia's defection to the AFC in 2006 left the OFC with 11 full members and two associates, Kiribati and Tuvalu. In the last year, football officials from both islands have visited Sepp Blatter and full FIFA membership is likely. However, the OFC is not trying to emulate Jack Warner's CONCACAF empire by recruiting tiny islands, where the game is hardly played, just for their votes at FIFA congresses.

This year, the OFC let one associate, the Commonwealth of the North Mariana Islands, join the AFC. Another, Niue, whose sole Pacific Games appearance in 1983 included a 19-0 thrashing by Papua New Guinea and a 14-0 rout at the hands of Tahiti, were ejected from the OFC due to lack of football development.

> **"You've got to expect some beatings to start with, but mentally the islanders do not like it"**
>
> *Paul Watson, who has set up a four-team league on Pohnpei*

"Lack of resources, finances [and] high cost of air fares make it difficult to assist football development," says OFC general secretary Tai Nicholas.

The OFC receives £1.5million a year through FIFA's financial assistance programme, plus another £5m through the "Win in Oceania" programme which was launched at the start of this year. But this does not even cover travelling expenses.

"We think associate or smaller federations should prioritise which tournaments they enter because of cost," suggests Nicholas. "But we do have a long-term plan to develop football in all the Pacific islands."

However, that plan is hindered by problems of making contact.

The French colony of Wallis & Futuna played in the Pacific Games on half-a-dozen occasions – even finishing fifth in 1987 – but have not entered since 1995. Along with Palau, Tokelau and Nauru, the OFC wants to make contact with the football authorities in Wallis & Futuna...but, unfortunately, they don't even have their phone number! ●

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Liverpool need a miracle - Benitez

Thursday 5th November 2009

Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez admits that his side now need a "miracle" if they are to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League.

Speaking after Lisandro Lopez's late goal for Lyon denied Liverpool all three points in the Stade de Gerland on Wednesday night, the Spaniard acknowledged that Liverpool's hopes were now hanging by a thread. **more >>**

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In a special feature, we turn the spotlight on the players who divide opinion by daring to be different

Zlatan Ibrahimovic

Helping Barcelona forget all about Eto'o

SAMUEL WHO? Barcelona fans have got over the break-up quicker than anyone could have ever imagined. Barely three months after their club swapped Samuel Eto'o and £36million for Zlatan Ibrahimovic with Inter, barely three months after they shook their heads sadly and asked themselves if coach Pep Guardiola had really lost it this time, they're head over heels in love again.

Affections have been swapped from the Cameroonian with the big heart to the Swede with the even bigger feet. The question now is: will it last?

When Eto'o and Ibrahimovic swapped clubs, Inter coach Jose Mourinho was hailing it a brilliant bit of business; from Barcelona's point of view it looked like the worst deal they'd ever struck. They had lost the striker who had scored more league goals than any other player in Spain over the last five years, the man with a pathological will to win who dragged his team through games, applying an asphyxiating pressure on opponents. The man who had won two European Cups and three league titles.

Barcelona had swapped a man who boasted 108 league goals in five years (two of them injury hit) for a man who had scored 80. They had exchanged a man who boasted 18 Champions League goals for a man who had half as many. They had handed over the man who always appeared when it really mattered, scoring the opening goal in the Champions League Final. Twice. And they had been given the man who never did it on the big occasions, who had not marked a single great night. And they had thrown a huge bag of cash into the bargain, too.

It looked like madness, especially when fate decreed they should meet in the Champions League group stages. Inter and Barcelona met at San Siro and the Cameroonian had the better game, Ibrahimovic volleying his best chance over.

But, as always with Guardiola, there appears to have been method in it. Seven games into the new season, Ibrahimovic has scored seven league goals to become the league's top scorer. Key goals too: four times he has scored Barcelona's all-important first. In the same number of games, Eto'o was on three at Inter. Ibrahimovic and Leo Messi are the most prolific partnership in Europe.

It is not just about the goals, either; in fact it's not about the goals at all. Ibrahimovic has provided four assists already and in the 6-1 demolition of Real Zaragoza, he produced an all-round performance of mind-boggling brilliance, leaving jaws on the floor and the Catalan newspaper *Sport* declaring: "Ibra has made everyone forget Eto'o."

The Swede does not have the pace or aggression of Eto'o; he does not chase down defenders in the same way and he does not release his shots anywhere near as early. But he battered a free-kick past Zaragoza keeper Juan Pablo Carrizo for one goal and provided an inch-perfect assist for Seydou Keita to score. His movement was impressive; he dropped to the wings to open out the play, his footwork was implausibly intricate, and he provided a consistent outlet. With his back to goal, receiving the ball on the chest and bringing others into the game, he looked unstoppable.

How's it going?... Eto'o and Ibrahimovic meet in Milan

> "Every week we are adapting to him better. Right from the start we knew he was different class"
>
> *Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola*

That is the key. Guardiola has always been a big fan of players who can perform the role that is described as the "inverted pivot". It was a role he thought was lacking in his team.

Guardiola felt that Barcelona needed something different. They needed to add strength, ability in the air and presence, to offer themselves a chance of a direct pass (that's a direct pass, it should be noted, not a long ball), a way of releasing the pressure and escaping when the centre of the pitch becomes unplayable. You can't always win with intricate football – even if Barcelona did always win last year, completing a unique treble. And besides, Ibrahimovic can do the neat stuff too. "Zlatan," Guardiola said, "gives us lots of options in attack." Options they didn't have last year.

It's tempting to conclude Guardiola wants his side to learn to be a little more effective, even if it sometimes means a little less aesthetic. Barcelona are adapting to Ibrahimovic as much as he is to them. And if others weren't so sure, Guardiola never had any question that he would.

"Every week that goes by we adapt to him better," he said. "Those who doubted him were those on the outside; right from the start those of us on the inside knew that Zlatan was different class and that he would be a big success here."●

Sid Lowe

Swedish style...Ibrahimovic has brought a new dimension to Barcelona's game

Antonio Cassano

Lippi's tormentor hogging Italian headlines

WHEN ITALY COACH Marcello Lippi turned up at Dublin's Clontarf Castle on the night before a memorable 2-2 World Cup qualifier draw with Giovanni Trapattoni's Republic of Ireland, probably the last thing he expected was questions about Sampdoria striker Antonio Cassano. After all, this was a news conference organised for the Irish media, for whom Cassano is hardly a pressing concern.

However, even the Irish media could not resist the temptation. "We hear, Mr. Lippi, that you have very bad relations with the Italian sports media, is this so?" Lippi was much surprised. "Who says that?" he asked. Colleagues pointed to your correspondent, who had indeed filed reports earlier in the week which had certainly suggested that relations were anything but idyllic. Lippi looked across at me, shook his head and smiled.

The point is that just three days earlier up at the Italian team training centre of Coverciano, Florence, Lippi had "got his retaliation in first" when meeting with the media. Knowing all too well that they were poised and ready to ask him awkward questions such as why he continues not to use the talented "enfant terrible" of Italian soccer, namely Cassano, Lippi pre-empted the hacks with an emphatic "no comment".

Speaking of the tedium of being consistently asked the same questions (about Cassano and others) by the sports hacks, he began with a quote from a basketball colleague, Dino Meneghin, saying: "I am really fed up with you lot". So, no questions about Cassano, please.

> **"If there are those who don't like me here, well, I've no problem. I'll pack up and go home"**
>
> *Cassano's reaction to the Sampdoria fans who jeered him after the team were held by Bari*

A week later, however, Cassano came back to haunt Lippi. By now the World Cup campaign had moved on to Parma where Italy, having won the group with that 2-2 draw in Dublin, were playing a relatively meaningless final group game against Cyprus. In a dramatic game, Italy, after being two goals down, pulled off a last-gasp win, scoring three goals in the last 14 minutes, all from Fiorentina striker Alberto Gilardino.

In the circumstances, one might have expected Lippi to be a happy camper. However, in front of the TV cameras, he expressed his fury with that (admittedly minority) section of the home fans who had spent much of the game shouting abuse at the seemingly inept Italian team. Worse still, the dissident fans took to chanting the name of Cassano while other supporters displayed banners urging Lippi to include the Sampdoria striker in his squad for South Africa. Lippi could hardly contain himself.

'Simply shameful'

"Look, let me say something. We earned our mathematical qualification last Saturday in Dublin and as you can imagine, we were very, very pleased and we had a bit of a party," he said. "For tonight's game, I changed the team entirely, all 11 players, something nobody ever does.

"So, as world champions, we come here to play a game that doesn't matter at all and what happens? As soon as we have a bit of difficulty, with a team that has never played together before, the crowd, instead of getting behind them, starts shouting the names of other players [Cassano] and abuse such as 'Go to work'. That was simply shameful, really shameful."

The point about 27-year-old Cassano, however, is that his name is likely to haunt Lippi from here until next May. Lippi himself refers to it as a *tormentone*, a pest or a nuisance who simply will not go away. For the former Bari, Roma and Real Madrid striker has been playing out of his skin for much of this season, taking over where he left off last year.

A genuine "inside forward" talent, with the ability to create things for those around him, Cassano has single-handedly played Sampdoria team-mate Giampaolo Pazzini into the Italian World Cup squad. His vision, off-the-ball movement, dribbling and ability to deliver the

Provocative...Cassano gestures to the Lazio fans during a match in Rome

Your boys are pants, Jose...Cassano confronts Mourinho after an Italian Cup clash

telling final pass all make him a player of exceptional talent.

Yet, with Cassano, there is a problem, one that Lippi sees all too clearly. As regular readers will know all too well, Cassano off the field is hardly a model footballer. His career has been littered with the sort of turbulent times and unorthodox behaviour that eventually led both Roma and Real Madrid to conclude that they could do without his particular genius.

Let me remind you of an extract from his revealing autobiography, *Dico Tutto* [I Tell All]. In that book, Cassano relates cheerfully how he obtained a key for a back gate at Roma's Trigoria training ground so as to be able to admit his lady for the night, even during a pre-match *"ritiro"*. Having opened the gate, the pair would then head to the physio's couch in a nearby youth team dressing room for fun and games.

He even claimed that such a pre-match preparation did him nothing but good, pointing out that on the occasion of Roma's memorable 4-0 win over Juventus in February 2004 (in which he scored two goals) he had been up until 6am on the day of the match making merry with his paramour of the moment. Such a player, for all his obvious talents, was never going to fulfill the Lippi *gruppo* or squad requirements.

Lippi believes passionately in the need to build a united, "one for all and all for one", squad in which there are no prima donnas and no messing. Time and again, when asked about the secret of Italy's success in Germany 2006, he points to the *gruppo* – a squad that expressed not just quality but also unity of purpose and single minded determination. Somehow, he feels, and many would agree with him, Cassano just does not fit into this regimentation.

Helping hand

Just when it looked as if the Cassano debate was going to boil over, however, the player himself came along with a helping hand for Lippi. Minutes after Sampdoria had been held to a 0-0 home draw by Bari on November 1, Cassano unusually offered himself to the media for a sizzling post-match comment. Annoyed by the fact that some of the Samp fans had whistled and jeered him during one of his less flamboyant performances, Cassano said: "For the last three or four games, some of the fans have been whistling at me and trying to get at me. That happened to me at Roma and I opted to leave. It happened to me again at Real and I opted again to leave.

"If there are those who don't like me here, well, I've no problem. I'll pack up and go home. The fans are used to eating caviar when it comes to me and just as soon as they have to eat shit, they do that to me. I mean, Sampdoria are second in the table, second."

There have been plenty of observers who have argued that Cassano is a new man, who has calmed down and turned over a new leaf. Perhaps, but this little outburst suggests otherwise. Remember his outburst in March of two seasons back when he threw his shirt at referee Nicola Pierpaoli after being sent off at the end of a 2-2 Sampdoria home draw with Torino.

What is sure is that the Cassano *"tormentone"* will run and run. The talented Cassano may well have a magnificent season but, knowing Lippi, we suspect that next June he will be watching the World Cup finals on TV, far from South Africa.●

Paddy Agnew

Juan Sebastian Veron

Plotting Estudiantes' world title bid

> "His father Juan Ramon was the outstanding figure at the club four decades ago"

SHORTLY AFTER Estudiantes had won their fourth Libertadores Cup title, coach Alejandro Sabella described captain and playmaker Juan Sebastian Veron as the most important player in the history of the club.

Veron's father might have something to say about that. Juan Ramon was the outstanding figure four decades ago as the club from La Plata accumulated their first three titles. He also scored a vital goal at Old Trafford as Estudiantes overcame Manchester United to win the then World Club Cup, which was played on a home and away basis.

But if Veron junior can lead the club to victory in Abu Dhabi then it might be hard to refute Sabella's claim. Four decades ago it was

Estudiantes' Mr Indispensible...Veron

Ride to glory...Veron hails Estudiantes' Libertadores Cup triumph as the team return from beating Brazil's Cruzeiro

much easier for the South American clubs to hold their own in such a contest. These days the balance has tilted firmly in favour of the Europeans, whose financial power permits them to snap up talent from across the globe.

Juan Sebastian Veron might still be one of those top-class South Americans turning out for a European giant. His time in England may not have been entirely convincing, but the same cannot be said for his spells in Italy, where he appeared with distinction for four different clubs. He could still be at Inter Milan today, but in 2006 he opted to go back home.

"It was a family thing," he says, "a desire to return to my country. Thanks to football I don't need to play, and on that basis I was able to make my choice."

And the option was to rejoin Estudiantes – not only the club of his father, but also the place where his professional career started – and much else besides. "The love I feel for the club has developed over time," he says. "It comes partly from my father, and the history of those years when he played for Estudiantes, and also from spending so much time at the club. I trained there from the age of five; during the holidays I went to summer camp there, I used to go to the stadium – I practically lived there."

> "The love I feel for Estudiantes comes partly from my father and also from spending so much time at the club. I practically lived there"

Under coach Oswaldo Zubeldia, the Estudiantes of the late 1960s were controversial but extraordinarily successful and Veron loves to talk about the winning mentality of his father's generation. "They've transmitted to us the importance of sacrifice, work, confidence and the humility of not thinking yourselves champions before the game has been played. It means this club is strong in decisive matches," he says.

After coming back from Italy he quickly established his leadership – and the first title came earlier than he had imagined. Estudiantes won the 2006 Apertura, their first national championship since 1983 and only their fourth ever. Veron's importance is clear both on and off the pitch – now 34, there are games where he is rested, but he can still be seen on the sidelines, encouraging his team-mates. He recently took a 40 per cent pay cut to ease Estudiantes' financial situation, and would seem to nurture long-term ambitions to become club president.

In the short term, though, he is most needed on the field. Veron is the hub of Estudiantes' game. Always available, he mixes up his passes – short give and goes, long raking diagonal balls to split the opposing defence. His reading of the game, the execution of his options and the delivery of his set pieces will all have to be first rate if Estudiantes are to come back with the world title.

"If we want to beat Barcelona we will have to play the perfect match," he says. "But though we're all thinking about the final, there's a [semi-final] step that we have to take before that, and we'll have to be careful."

But it would indeed be fitting to see a player who graced European football for a decade have a chance to take on the Champions League winners. Veron was not able to win that competition, though Manchester United fans will recall he saved some of his best performances for those midweek nights.

Class tells...Veron takes on Uruguay's Defensor in the Libertadores Cup

"There, things are more structured," he says of the Champions League. "But it's hard to find the passion for football that we have in South America." And not easy to come across a player who feels as strong a bond with his club as Veron and Estudiantes.●

Tim Vickery

The new mavericks

Six rising talents who divide footballing opinion

Nick Bidwell

Mario Balotelli

Internazionale (Ita)

This Italian-born attacker of Ghanaian extraction may be a colossal talent: lightning-quick, skilful, brave and athletic. Yet such qualities have not prevented the teenager being one of the country's most hated players. Provocative and insolent on the pitch, he loves to get under the skin of opposing players and fans – after scoring against Roma he taunted their supporters and stuck out his tongue at Christian Panucci – while his coach Jose Mourinho often bemoans his lack of professionalism, his tendency to turn up late for training and general "easy come, easy go attitude". More trouble than he is worth? Possibly.

Jesus Navas

Sevilla (Spa)

A dazzling presence on the right flank of his club his quick feet, powers of acceleration and vivid imagination should have entrenched him in the Spain senior squad a long time ago. Tragically, though, *"La Joya"* (The Jewel) has yet to win his first full cap and maybe never will. Prone to anxiety attacks and acute homesickness, Navas has trouble coping when removed from his Sevilla bubble, dropping out of an Under-21 training camp and unable to go through with a move to the Premier League when Chelsea came calling.

Tommy Hoiland

Viking (Nor)

Literally anything can happen when the Stavanger-based striker crosses the white line. Good, bad or ugly. Likened to Wayne Rooney for his hair-trigger personality and all-action style, he could be the answer to Norway's prayers. But first he has to tone down the bad boy act, the willingness to get his retaliation in first and to dive theatrically. Not surprising that his favourite player is the former Leeds and Manchester United attacker Alan Smith – now at Newcastle – who himself was no stranger to disciplinary bodies.

Stephane Sessegnon

Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)

The Benin international cannot seem to rid himself of the reputation of a footballing loose cannon, a player who combines moments of sublime technical ability with rank inconsistency and rushes of blood to the head. His playing style is often compared to that of the Dutch midfielder Clarence Seedorf, but he has none of the latter's composure. If he considers himself a victim of injustice, he immediately goes into vigilante mode, such as last season when he reacted to insults from Saint-Etienne's Blaise Matuidi by butting him.

Miguel Veloso

Sporting Lisbon (Por)

The son of former Benfica and Portugal full-back Antonio Veloso, his offspring has proved himself a most accomplished defensive midfielder or left-back, also winning full caps. However, many question his commitment, pointing to an inclination to pile on the pounds and flashy extra-curricular pursuits such as modelling designer gear. "Those who like spending time at fashion shows and who have an overlarge backside will miss the bus to Euro 2008," stormed then Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari. Veloso did go to those finals but mud sticks.

Karim Ziani

Wolfsburg (Ger)

Diminutive Algerian midfielder or winger who can on his day be an electrifying influence, driving defenders to despair with his rare capacity for twisting and turning with the ball stuck to his feet. Now for the bad news – an excess of temperamental baggage which threatens to scupper his career. During a spell at Marseille, he was involved in a half-time fight with coach Eric Gerets and since moving to Wolfsburg this summer in a £4.5million deal, he has already "distinguished" himself with a nasty clash in training with star striker Edin Dzeko.

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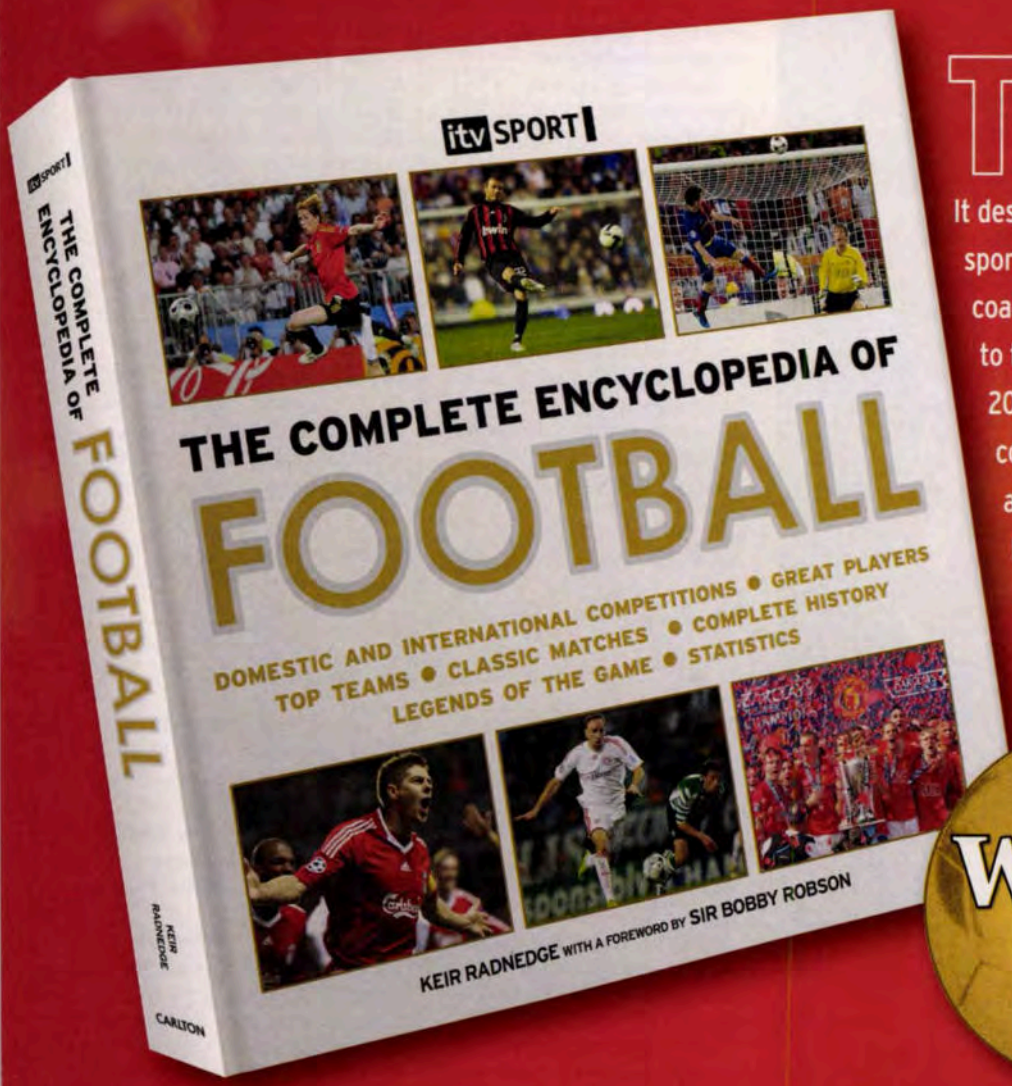

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PARAGUAY
Cristian Riveros

The ideal candidate to supply much-needed drive from midfield

Mr Dynamo...Riveros has come a long way since his timid displays in the last World Cup

THERE WILL BE one simple way to gauge Paraguay's approach in South Africa: can Cristian Riveros be seen popping up in the opposing penalty area?

In Paraguay's fourth consecutive World Cup finals, Argentinian coach Gerardo Martino will want them to try to take the initiative, but he is working in a footballing culture that is often most comfortable in deep defence. While his side can count on a number of dangerous strikers, they will almost certainly be left isolated and living off scraps with the rest of the team hanging back.

Midfielder Riveros holds the best hope of a more aggressive attitude – as a glance at the qualification statistics makes clear. While defender Paulo Da Silva headed two against Chile, all the team's other goals came from their strikers – except for the three from Riveros who, in 18 games, was the only midfielder to get on the score sheet.

With the lung power to work box to box and the ability to shoot with either foot, 27-year-old Riveros has the capacity to link Paraguay's strikers with the rest of the side. A perfect illustration was the goal he scored against Venezuela in qualifying when he set up the move from deep, four of his team-mates then combining as he kept running to round it off by guiding home a low cross from the left.

The dilemma for Martino is that Riveros is so versatile. But coach and player know each other well. Martino was in charge of Libertad, where Riveros made his name with a series of excellent performances in 2005 and 2006. Martino is aware, then, that he can also carry out a more defensive role. Against Argentina in Buenos Aires he performed an unselfish marking job on Juan Roman Riquelme.

Paraguay, though, have other players who can do this. What they do not have is midfielders with the dynamism to burst beyond the strikers and offer a threat to the opposing goal.

It was a role that Paraguay, then under Anibal Ruiz, hoped he might fulfil in the last World Cup in Germany. Riveros did fire off his side's first shot in anger against England, but in the event his performances in that game and the next against Sweden were as timid as those of his team-mates. He was a newcomer to the level and looked every inch the small-town boy finding his feet on the global stage – hardly surprising, because that is what he was.

"He has the lung power to work box to box and link Paraguay's strikers with the rest of the side"

From the tiny rural outpost of Juan Augusto Saldivar, Riveros' first division debut came with San Lorenzo on the outskirts of Asuncion, before he moved to the capital to join little Tacuary and then Libertad. Now, though, things are different. Riveros is a star of Mexican football with Cruz Azul and, with eight goals in 44 appearances, is a senior international who is a vital and valued member of the Paraguay line-up. It should give him all the confidence he needs to lead the charge from midfield in South Africa.

Tim Vickery

SLOVAKIA
Marek Hamsik

Napoli midfielder is the vital cog in the Slovak machine

"I LOVE THESE guys," exclaimed the overjoyed Slovakia coach, Vladimir , after his side prevailed 1-0 in a Polish snowstorm to reach their first World Cup finals as an independent entity. And so he should. Weiss' squad truly have delivered for him – and none more so than Napoli attacking midfielder Hamsik; he of the conspicuous ability, buck-teeth, vertical hair and multiple tattoos.

A vital cog in a Slovak machine which surpassed all expectations in topping a far-from-straightforward Group C – which also included the likes of Czech Republic, Poland, Northern Ireland and Slovenia – the 22-year-old not only contributed two vital goals in two vital fixtures (one in the home win over Northern Ireland, another, a penalty, to help his side hold the Czechs to a 2-2 draw in Bratislava) but he also caught the eye with his technical dexterity, drive on the left flank or through the middle, and perfectly timed breaks into the opposition danger zone.

Slovakia's famous old stadium, the Tehelne Pole in Bratislava, may be so rundown these days that it needs to be redeveloped, but the same cannot be said of Hamsik, who has two good feet, high energy, good shooting power, intense competitiveness and a barely concealed swagger.

"There's a little of Frank Lampard in the way Hamsik gets forward so effectively into goalscoring positions," says former Czechoslovakia and Slovakia midfielder Lubo Moravcik. "He's a fighter and has proved that he can cut it in a slightly more defensive role in the middle of the park. But what Slovakia need more than anything else is someone to make the difference in the attacking-third and he's the ideal man. Vladimir Weiss recognises this and gives him plenty of scope to concentrate on what he does best – to go forward.

"I think he's crucial to our chances in South Africa. Although he's still a youngster, he's been in the national team for a long while [he made his debut against Poland at the age of 17 in February 2007] and knows what it's all about. I expect him to rise to the occasion. For the past couple of years at Napoli he has played in front of massive crowds and usually done himself justice.

"He has an attitude I like. He's very single-minded. As a teenager who had just broken into the Slovan Bratislava first team, he might have considered continuing his development there. But when Italian side Brescia came in for him, the kid didn't hesitate. He had the belief that he'd make it in the Italian league and has been proved right."

From the city of Banska Bystrica in central Slovakia, Hamsik certainly has come a long way since Brescia paid Slovan Bratislava £500,000 for him back in 2004. Three years of impressive work later, Napoli thought nothing of paying £5.5million to lure him south and now, solidly entrenched as a San Paolo headliner, he is thought to be worth at least three times as much. Not that his admirers at Juventus, Internazionale or in the Premier League are likely to be deterred.

Driving force...Hamsik gets in a shot on goal during the World Cup qualifier against Slovenia

"There's a little of Frank Lampard in the way he gets forward so effectively into goalscoring positions"

Events this year may tempt him to move on. He was a victim of a carjacking in Naples and had the local police out for his blood when he claimed in an interview that traffic cops in the city turned a blind eye to his speeding.

"We'll see what happens," he declares enigmatically. "I love Napoli, the club, the city and its people.

"There's more than enough to focus on this season. We have to improve Napoli's league position and then it's the World Cup. I'm proud to be part of a Slovak team which has made history. No one thought it possible for us to qualify and even now we are not receiving much recognition for our achievement. We totally deserved to win our group. Seven wins in 10 games, including a win in Prague, says it all. I don't know about specific goals in South Africa but I can assure our fans that we aren't going along just for the ride."

Should Slovakia be involved in a penalty shoot-out next year, Hamsik will be in his element. At one particular Brescia training session he was on target with 56 consecutive spot-kicks.

Nick Bidwell

SWITZERLAND
Blaise Nkufo

Veteran striker has finally ditched his "Nearly Man" tag

Up where he belongs...Nkufo has earned Switzerland coach Hitzfeld's trust

THE LONGER the trek across the desert, the sweeter the arrival at the oasis. Nine years after making his Switzerland debut, veteran striker Blaise Nkufo has finally established himself as a fully-fledged international – and a proven source of goals for a Swiss side on the road to South Africa.

Before the start of the qualifying campaign, Nkufo, born in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) but raised in Lausanne, was the dictionary definition of a national team nearly man. Unable to translate his fine form at club level – for Lausanne, Lugano and Luzern – to the *Nati*, he grew ever frustrated and, feeling that the then head coach, Kobi Kuhn, was not giving him an even break, he decided to opt out.

The self-imposed exile lasted five years (from 2002 to 2007) and even when he eventually agreed to a rapprochement with Kuhn, the fates were not kind, forcing him to withdraw from the Euro 2008 squad with a thigh injury.

Well into his thirties, his international future looked distinctly behind him. However, all was to change for the better following the appointment of Ottmar Hitzfeld as Switzerland's new boss in the summer of 2008. Noting Nkufo's goalscoring exploits in Holland with Twente – where he has topped the bill for the past half-dozen seasons – Hitzfeld quickly became a convert and would soon regard his front-line pairing with skipper Alex Frei as one of the cornerstones of the team. In the qualifiers Frei and Nkufo each scored five times. But it was the latter who struck when the stakes were at their highest. He hit the winner in the group-defining 2-1 win in Greece, and was also decisive in the 2-2 draw in Israel, heading his team's second goal.

"When Ottmar Hitzfeld arrived, everyone started with a clean slate," says Switzerland assistant coach Michel Pont. "From the word go, Blaise felt the coach had total confidence in him and responded almost immediately.

"Blaise is an extremely calm, discreet and thoughtful guy. Sometimes he thinks a little too much. He's a perfectionist in the way he approaches his profession. It explains the consistency of his performances and why he is still going strong."

> **"This World Cup will be my first and my last. I am very aware of it and must not let it pass me by"**

Critics often claim he is slow, yet it has not prevented him developing into a Dutch league scoring sensation. Athletic, very strong in the air and with impeccable instincts in and around the box, he has over 100 Eredivisie goals in the bank, making him Twente's top marksman of all time.

"I knew that if I kept on scoring at Twente, I would have an opportunity to rejoin the *Nati*," says Nkufo, a highly intelligent man who made sure he stayed in education to pass his high school baccalaureate and now loves to read philosophy.

"The age of 34 is young for a man but old in terms of football. This World Cup will be my first and my last. I'm very aware of it and must not let it pass me by."

Nick Bidwell

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PLAY-OFFS

Domenech seeks edge over Il Trap

Strength in depth...Domenech

IT'S CRUNCH TIME with the final places for South Africa 2010 set to be decided, and France justifiably headed into their play-off against the Republic of Ireland as favourites, especially given they are at home in the second leg.

But the Republic's record in qualifying – they didn't lose a single game in ending up just behind Italy – suggests the games could be closer than many French fans anticipate.

Raymond Domenech's side have never looked particularly at ease and heads have been scratched at the coach's selections, his substitutions and his tactical formations.

Yet despite his unpopularity, Domenech's position has always seemed unassailable. Such is France's strength, he could drop Lassana Diarra, Nicolas Anelka, Patrice Evra and William Gallas from the squad to face Austria last month and still draft in the likes of Florent Malouda, Karim Benzema, Alou Diarra and Gael Clichy.

France will be without the talismanic Franck Ribery against the Republic because of a troublesome knee injury. A blow but by no means fatal.

Even Giovanni Trapattoni's assistant Liam Brady says that "the French have more talent in their ranks than we do". But as we all know in do-or-die situations the most talented team doesn't always win out.

Bosnia coach Mirolsav Blazevic says his team will not hold back against Portugal in Lisbon, even though nine of their players are one booking away from missing the return.

"I don't expect any of them to have a psychological block over it," he said. "We have to get a good result even if it means we are crippled in the return."

Michael McGlinchey looks for a happy homecoming to Wellington, the city of his birth, as New Zealand take on Bahrain in the second leg of the Asia/Oceania play-off.

Former Celtic midfielder McGlinchey, who moved to Glasgow as a baby with his family, is set for only his third start for the All Whites since getting the call from coach Ricki Herbert and said: "It's weird how it's all worked out."

Uruguay, in their third successive play-off, travel to San Jose for the first leg against Costa Rica, who are set to be without coach Rene Simoes, sent to the stands in a row over substitutions in the last CONCACAF qualifier against the USA.

Howard Johnson

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Unbeaten in group stage...Trapattoni

SECOND DIVISION

Nick Bidwell selects half a dozen of the brightest talents playing outside the top flight

Sergio GARCIA
REAL BETIS

WHEN BETIS suffered the ignominy of relegation from La Liga last term, it was widely assumed that their international striker Sergio Garcia would be the first to head for the door, with his father and agent making strong hints to that effect. However, the 26-year-old – who only joined the Beticos from Zaragoza in a £8million deal in the summer of 2008 – did not cut and run, insisting his priority was to repair the damage done at the Andalucian club.

A member of the Spain squad that triumphed at Euro 2008, he could well turn out to be the difference between Betis making the promotion cut and Segunda stagnation. While his skill and cerebral play are normally used on the right flank or in a striking berth, *Verdiblanco* boss Antonio Tapia switched him to a playmaking role this season and, with a lot more time and space to operate in, he has been in seventh heaven linking midfield and the front line.

Involved in his first campaign outside the top division since 2004 (when he lined up for his home-town club, Barcelona B), he is prepared to grin and bear it for the greater good of Betis.

David DI MICHELE
TORINO

AFTER ENJOYING a loan spell at West Ham United last season, and scoring four times in 30 league games, Italian striker David Di Michele was keen to make the move permanent, with his desire to remain in east London intensified by the fact that his mother club, Torino, had fallen into Serie B during his absence.

But ultimately the Hammers decided they could do without him and so he reluctantly returned to sender – where the captain's armband and a far-from-insubstantial pay packet (£800,000 a year) awaited him. One thing is for sure: there will be no hiding place for the feisty little 33-year-old at *Toro*.

Capped six times by Italy and a proven marksman at all his previous postings (Foggia, Salernitana, Udinese, Reggina and Palermo), he is expected to drive the Torino wagon straight back to the elite. Should they fail to deliver, he will be the first in the firing line. He has set himself a target of at least 23 goals: the same number he managed for Salernitana in Serie B in 1999-00, when the fans in Salerno called him "The King".

Will the Turin faithful enthrone him too?

Jonas OLSSON
WEST BROMWICH ALBION

TO GAIN PROMOTION to the Premier League, a steely defensive core is an absolute must in the Championship – and a West Brom rearguard built around uncompromising Swedish centre-back Jonas Olsson looks tailor-made.

A law graduate, the 26-year-old hopes one day to work in the field of human rights...not that he shows any affinity with civil liberties on the pitch. With no chance of him respecting a forward's freedom of expression, he takes no prisoners and it is this "they shall not pass" spirit which makes him so popular with supporters.

In his second season with the Baggies, following a £800,000 move from Dutch outfit NEC Nijmegen, he was appointed club vice-captain this summer by new manager Roberto Di Matteo.

With Sweden in need of fresh foundations after failing to qualify for the World Cup, the Landskrona-born one-man wrecking crew is well placed to establish himself on the international stage, possibly at the expense of Olympiakos' Olaf Mellberg – the stopper he admires more than any other.

STARS SIX OF THE BEST

Johnny PLACIDE
LE HAVRE

IF THE OLDEST club in France are making a good fist of bouncing back to the top flight at the first attempt, it is in no small part due to the impressive positioning, reflexes and calmness under pressure of their young keeper Johnny Placide, who has taken to first-team football like a duck to water this season after displacing the seemingly inexhaustible veteran Christophe Revault.

Born and brought up in the suburbs of Paris, he took advantage of family lineage to play for the Haiti Olympic side in the qualifiers for the Beijing Games and performed so ably that he was dubbed the island's best goalkeeping prospect since 1974 World Cup star Henri Francillon. Unfortunately for Haiti, the 21-year-old has since decided to throw in his lot with France and at this summer's Toulon Under-20 tournament he was quite the star pupil, saving two penalties in the semi-final shoot-out victory over Argentina.

Le Havre certainly know how to nurture goalkeeping talent, with Marseille and France no1 Steve Mandanda starting his career there.

Mark DE VRIES
CAMBUUR

DESPITE SCORING three goals in the Dutch promotion/relegation play-offs last season, the towering Surinamese-Dutch striker Mark De Vries suffered heartbreak in the Final against Roda, missing a spot-kick in his side's penalty shoot-out loss.

It was the toughest of setbacks for a 34-year-old who is under no illusion that his time in the game is almost up. But if he was frustrated at coming so close to the Eredivisie, the hangover has not overrun into the current campaign, with De Vries scoring regularly as the Leeuwarden club put down a marker at the top of the Eerste Divisie.

In Cambuur yellow since the summer of 2008, he is not what you might term a lover of routine, having spent his career in transit at Volendam, Dordrecht, Heerenveen and Den Haag in Holland, French side Niort, Hearts and Dundee United in Scotland, and English outfits Leicester City and Leeds United.

The highlight so far has probably been the three years he spent at Hearts, where he became an instant Tynecastle hero thanks to four goals in his very first Edinburgh derby – a 5-1 thrashing of Hibernian in 2002.

Sandro WAGNER
MSV DUISBURG

REJECTION BY BAYERN Munich does not always mean a downward spiral. Midfielders Piotr Trochowski and Zvjezdan Misimovic were both branded Bayern misfits before becoming marquee names at Hamburg and Wolfsburg respectively – and the 21-year-old Sandro Wagner is currently enjoying the same beyond-Bavaria fillip.

Only deemed worthy of a handful of starts in the Bayern first team, he realised last year that he would have to move on to rekindle his professional flame – and he has prospered at Duisburg in every sense, establishing himself as one of the most complete front runners in 2.Bundesliga and helping Germany win the 2009 European Under-21 title.

Fighting against the odds is his proud credo. At last summer's Euro tournament he was initially a bench-warmer, but finally managed to worm his way into the team and scored two fine goals in the 4-0 Final victory over England.

Just as comfortable creating as finishing, he is inspired by highly technical forwards such as Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Emmanuel Adebayor, and could do a lot worse in the role-model stakes.

Jorge Valdano

Signing the best players in the world has been a constant throughout Real Madrid's history

Jorge Valdano

Real Madrid's sporting director on dealing with the weight of expectations at the club

Life with the galacticos

With Florentino Perez's return to the Santiago Bernabeu, everyone is talking about the second coming of the galacticos. What differences do you see between this Real Madrid and that one?
The fundamental difference is that last time Madrid had a team; now we have a squad. This is a much more balanced squad, but the basic policy is the same and always has been. Signing the world's best players began with Alfredo Di Stefano and has been a constant throughout the club's history. When Madrid did not have the best players in the world they stopped being Madrid. We were always very uncomfortable with the word "galactico" but it's impossible to avoid – every tournament we play takes place on Earth.

It's going to take a while to get it right, isn't it? You've practically bought a whole new team.
Football is a game of habits, and habits need time. But I'm convinced we will succeed in playing great football. We have two advantages. One, we're in very good hands. Manuel Pellegrini has reached professional maturity. He's been in Spain a long time and he's a coach who makes his teams the protagonist in every game. He seeks to dominate possession and always looks to attack. He fits perfectly with the history of Real Madrid. And two, this is a very professional group of players, one that's easy to work with. Our big stars are also committed and hard-working.

So far you have had good results but there are question marks over the performances.
All we lack is a little fluidity. The team is very comfortable in both areas – not just attacking, defending too – but we need more pause and tranquillity in the middle. That said, because of the characteristics of the players, we're a more direct team than people think. The Bernabeu fans are impatient; they don't like long, slow build-ups, they like more direct football. This is a team that's more comfortable accelerating than slowing the game down.

So, Barcelona are not the footballing model to follow?
Madrid have never copied anyone.

Are Madrid over-dependent on Cristiano Ronaldo?
His role in the Madrid team is as decisive as his role at Manchester United. When you have one of the best players in the world you have to use him to the point of abusing him. That's normal. Logically, he's arrived with the intention of being decisive, but that doesn't mean that we depend solely upon him.

How important will Xabi Alonso be in bringing that fluidity? Could his signing be as important as Cristiano Ronaldo's?
Xabi will be decisive for us because of his intelligence, his maturity, his capacity for influencing games, and quality. He is going to be the man who dictates the style and pace of the team. Ronaldo has the power to change the result – the greatest power there is during a match. Xabi has the power to change the play, to impose himself on the course of a match, like the director of the orchestra.

Supporters were surprised by the departures of Klaas-Jan Huntelaar, Arjen Robben and Wesley Sneijder. What was the thinking behind that?
Huntelaar was a victim of [Karim] Benzema. Given that we had players like [Ruud] Van Nistelrooy and Raul, he was set to play a very secondary role, so we found him a club to fit his ambitions – Milan was a very good option. In the case of Sneijder [who joined Internazionale], it's true there was a time when we were short of players in the middle and we thought he could make us stronger there. But the arrival of [Esteban] Granero and Xabi Alonso, and the fact that during pre-season the coach played with four attackers, changed the club's position. There was not much sense keeping him.

And Robben?
During pre-season he came on as a sub in lots of games – and always played very well. We thought he would be satisfied with that but a few days before the new season his father told us his son wanted to have a more important role [and he joined Bayern Munich].

They weren't economic decisions, then?
Well, in the real world, if you sign [Zlatan] Ibrahimovic you sell [Samuel] Eto'o.

What role does president Florentino Perez play in the day-to-day running of the club?
Florentino decides on strategic questions, takes part in important decisions and is on top of even the smallest details. He participates in all decisions.

Including footballing ones? What about signing new players?
Of course. I don't know any club where the president opposes a signing and the club still signs him. Ultimately, he's responsible. His word is key.

If you want to sign, say, Wayne Rooney from Manchester United and Florentino says no, does that mean you don't sign him? Or how about, to put the question the other way round, if Florentino wants to sign Rooney and the technical staff and the coach don't want him, does he end up getting signed anyway?
Given the type of players that Real Madrid sign, reaching a consensus is very easy. I understand that the media are attracted to this idea but we have never found ourselves in that kind of situation. If we are not all happy, the player doesn't get signed. Signing a player who the coach doesn't want is a terrible error. It'd be very unintelligent to sign a player against his will. Beyond the galacticos, if you want to sign a player, you need to convince the president. And when the president is convinced,

the signing goes ahead.

Is it hard to convince him?
No. This year we made eight signings. If it was difficult we wouldn't have had time to sign so many players.

The obvious aim is the Champions League Final at the Bernabeu. Would it be sad to sit and watch a Final without Real Madrid?
Yes, for me, it would be. Our hope is to be there. But we can't let that be an obsession. Football is a game and it stops being a game when it becomes infused with anguish. We can't live our lives worrying about that. What we have to do is earn the right to be in the Final. It's worth noting that Madrid went 32 years without winning the European Cup and that didn't stop us being the best club of the 20th century. So if history has taught us anything it's to be patient.

You talk about patience but no one is going to give Madrid time after you spent more than £200million. Is this team obliged to win it all?
No. Our obligation is to get better each day – and results are a consequence of doing things the right way.

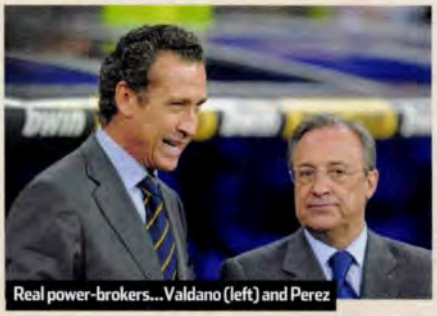
Let's put it another way. Would it be a failure if Madrid don't win anything?
Failure is not giving everything you can to achieve your objective...although I know very well what the public perception will be.

The pressure is immense.
That's one of the reasons we look closely at a player's personality when we sign him. Not everyone can handle the pressure. We can't control the pressure and the demands that come from outside. Florentino has discovered the secret of creating expectation, but he still hasn't found the antidote.

How can you minimise that pressure?
A director has to counteract media opinions, to lean the other way. You have to be like the rider in a motorcycle sidecar, pulling against the momentum, against the current of opinion. At moments of euphoria, you have to be critical because euphoria distances you from reality; at moments of negativity, you have to extenuate the positive.

The problem might be your opponents as you're up against one of the best Barcelona sides ever. Considering you're close to Pep Guardiola and share his footballing philosophy, you seem very reluctant to praise them now.
I work where I work and the focus of my attention is Real Madrid. Last year, I was a commentator on football and I spoke in very eulogistic terms about Guardiola right from the first minute, at a time when there were enormous doubts surrounding him. At that time, I gave over three full-page articles to Barcelona and Guardiola. My position hasn't changed at all. The thing is, my attention has to be trained elsewhere now. I'm not paid to motivate our rivals!

UEFA is becoming increasingly interested in financial fair play. Where do Madrid stand on that and would you support measures to limit the spending of clubs?
We will support any initiative of that sort. UEFA and FIFA are stressing the importance of bringing the total outlay on salaries below 70 per cent of a club's income. We're below 50 per cent, so we would be comfortable with any imposition FIFA make. It's a question of survival for football. Big clubs have to take responsibility because they are the ones that mark out the pathway for other clubs to follow.


Real power-brokers...Valdano (left) and Perez

Dictating Madrid's style...Alonso

New galacticos...(from left) Benzema, Ronaldo and Kaka

And what about the signing of extremely young players?
We have to establish a rigid system of control to prevent abuses. Happy cases like Leo Messi [who joined Barcelona at 13] make millions of kids think they are going to be successful, but in many cases those kids end up abandoned to their fate, with no future in football and no formal education. It's right that FIFA should be very strict in controlling the movement of young players.

Madrid have signed the best player from England, Italy and France. Is La Liga now the world's best league?
The Spanish league is the best in the world – not just because of the players, but because of the play. And that says a lot about the media and the fans: they demand a certain level of entertainment. The investments that Madrid have made have benefited the league in general because it has brought the spotlight back onto Spain.

But by buying from Milan, Manchester United, Liverpool and Lyon that money goes abroad.
Yes, but it's also true that the majority of the clubs we have bought from have not reinvested that money, so it has not served to strengthen them. Manchester United and Milan have not spent what they have gained.

Is the risk that Madrid and Barcelona will turn the Spanish league into a two-horse race in which no one else can compete?
The dominance of Madrid and Barcelona is a question of budget and that's true in almost all developed countries. We'll see how that evolves in the long term but Madrid and Barcelona can lose with any of the teams near the bottom. The media is talking about the fact that there are two clubs that stand way above the rest. Well, last year was worse – last year there was just one. I'm sure that the desire to compete at the highest possible level will push other clubs into responding to that challenge and improving, just as has happened with Madrid now after Barcelona's success. That creates a virtuous circle.

But those clubs can't afford to respond.
Signing the best players in the world is not easy, that's true. But clubs can take advantage of other markets – there are lots of talented young players and Spanish clubs do have the capability to turn to that market.

Interview by Sid Lowe

Lucas Leiva

The Liverpool and Brazil midfielder on coming to terms with English football

"I'm coming through my rocky patch"

You have been a Liverpool player for two years now. How would you assess your career in England so far?
I feel I am finally adapting to English football and to the responsibility of wearing the Liverpool shirt. I admit there has been a rocky patch, but I am quite optimistic. I know I can repay the faith the club and the supporters put in me.

Do you feel we have seen your best performances yet?
I am a young guy who is having his first experience of playing abroad, so there is obviously a learning curve. I am feeling much more confident and I just want to help Liverpool challenge for major honours as soon as possible. This is a massive club and you feel different when you step on the pitch to defend the club's honour.

What have been the best and worst times for you since you arrived?
Some parts of last season were tough, but I look back to it as a chance to become a better person and player. You must learn to handle the criticism if you want to persevere in football. Losing our quarter-final against Chelsea in the Champions League also hurt me. As for the good moments, I like to remember scoring my first goal for Liverpool, in the FA Cup. The 4-1 drubbing we gave Manchester United at Old Trafford was also quite special. I hope to be naming more good moments soon...

You have endured a difficult relationship with the fans. Why?
At a club like Liverpool it's like trying to play for Brazil: you have to fight your corner at every game. The fans will be by your side if they trust you but you can never take them for granted. I believe I have proved to Liverpool fans that I'm willing to sweat blood for this team and to try to make the crowd happy.

Do you feel settled in the city of Liverpool?
Liverpool is quite a different city from Porto Alegre, where I lived for a good part of my life. The weather is a bit too cold, but I have learned to appreciate what the city has to offer. Liverpool has amazing parks and restaurants and it is not chaotic like London. I am happy here, as much as I miss friends and family in Brazil.

Have you been surprised by the passion for the club?
Every time I walk on to the pitch at Anfield and see that sea of scarves, I feel butterflies in my stomach. People here are crazy about football. Liverpool fans seem to be a bit more passionate since they have been craving for the Premier League. They are hungry!

Many players have struggled with the physical nature of English football at first. Is that true for you?
It was natural to struggle a bit at the beginning, but I don't think it has been a major issue, although the game in England is so much faster. I like to think the differences are a challenge, not a hurdle.

> It was natural to struggle a bit at the beginning... the game in England is so much faster

Who has been your toughest opponent in the Premier League so far?
There is no such thing as an easy opponent in the Premier League, but there are some special battles. Frank Lampard is a guy that I admire for his combination of qualities. The guy is tough, intelligent and skilful.

Now Xabi Alonso has left, do you view this season as a big chance to establish yourself as a first-team regular?
We will certainly miss a guy like Xabi but it is now a chance for me to step up and show my work. It is a big chance, obviously, but I am more concerned with how Liverpool can win trophies than being a replacement for him. I have to be more versatile because sometimes I will need to play alongside Javier Mascherano and other times with Stevie [Gerrard], which will demand different tactical roles for me.

Were you surprised when you heard Xabi Alonso had left the club and joined Madrid?
These things happen in football, but a team like Liverpool cannot depend on one player. Even Stevie Gerrard and Fernando Torres need the rest of the team behind them. We will win things by being a team, not by being a collection of talents.

Can you become as popular as Xabi?
Popularity is a consequence of your work and I believe I can show the fans how committed I am. It's pointless to merely compare players.

Do you feel Liverpool's squad is strong enough?
We have a strong group with quality players. Splashing cash is not always the solution to winning trophies.

What are your personal ambitions and targets for the season?
I want to be part of Liverpool history, and one way would be by helping them win the Premier League. I also need to have a great season because of Brazil. The World Cup is around the corner and I want to be part of it. For my family it's a bit more special as my uncle, Leivinha, was in the Brazil squad for Germany 1974 and I want to emulate him.

Interview by Adrian Clarke

BRAZIL

GIULIANO

Under-20 skipper headed for bigger and better things

BRAZIL BEAT Ghana to win the World Youth Cup in 1993 but that campaign could hardly be called a success as, of the winning team, only goalkeeper Dida went on to play a competitive game at senior level. The 2001 competition, however, was of far greater long-term value. Although Brazil were beaten by Ghana in the quarter-finals this time, such talents as Kaka, Adriano, Julio Baptista and Luisao all picked up useful experience on their way to the full international squad.

Brazil's hope now is that any pain suffered from going down on penalties to Ghana in the 2009 Final will be more than offset by the role the tournament plays in grooming stars of the future – with 19-year-old midfielder Giuliano Victor de Paula seemingly the strongest candidate.

He was not the most eye-catching talent on show in a yellow shirt, but he looked the most mature: a testament to his progress through the youth ranks of the national team. From substitute in the 2007 South American Under-17 Championship, on to the team sheet in that year's Under-17 World Cup, through key player in the South American Under-20s in January to captain in the Under-20 World Cup, this is a story of steady development.

Promising enough to be thrown into first-team football with Parana soon after his 17th birthday, he was snapped up at the end of last year by Internacional of Porto Alegre, a club forever on the lookout for good young players.

Despite the depth of Inter's squad, Giuliano was soon making such a contribution to the first team that the club were reluctant to release him for the Under-20 World Cup – and missed him while he was away.

A hunched-shouldered figure with a low centre of gravity, Giuliano is excellent on the turn, has tight dribbling skills, passes accurately and is a superb lobber of the ball.

And he is no passenger when it comes to defensive duties either. During the course of the tournament in Egypt, Internacional changed their coach and such was the youngster's versatility that new boss Mario Sergio was even musing about playing him at right wing-back.

His future, though, is surely in midfield, and perhaps in a slightly deeper role than he fulfilled in the Under-20 World Cup, where he usually featured as the central attacking midfielder in Brazil's 4-2-3-1 formation. With his all-round abilities he might best be used further back, not only protecting the defence but also organising the play and setting the moves in motion. This is not a position in which Brazil have been particularly blessed in recent times.

If losing the Under-20 World Cup helps Giuliano solve that particular problem, it will have been a price well worth paying.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club Internacional
Country Brazil
Born May 31, 1990, in Curitiba
Previous club Parana
Honours South American Under-17 championship 2007, South American Under-20 championship 2009

Samuel INKOOM

Under-20 winner with South Africa in sight

WING-PLAY was a well-trodden avenue in Ghana's conquest of the Under-20 World crown and they have a wonderful practitioner of the art in Inkoom, a right-back who also figured prominently in the Black Satellites' African title early this year.

Like his full-back partner David Addy, the ever-effervescent Inkoom never misses an opportunity to step on the gas and go forward. Contrary to those who suggested his final ball was hit-or-miss, his crossing on the whole was first-rate in Egypt, creating goals against England, South Korea and Hungary.

While some would call his attacking style hara-kiri, Inkoom, to his credit, usually avoids stepping too close to the defensive cliff. Whenever attacks broke down deep in enemy territory, he raced back with all limbs pumping and, in his astonishing powers of recovery and sheer tenacity, seems to have more than enough anti-forward equipment.

He is certainly a natural-born competitor. Already a full international, his chances of going to South Africa next year are good, with senior Ghana coach Milovan Rajevac saying: "He's been a nice surprise. He's a big threat joining up with the attack. But day by day he's maturing into a team player, more comfortable in his defensive duties."

On the advice of his mentors – Ghana captain and midfielder Stephen Appiah and ex-pro Alex Nyarko – Inkoom left Asante Kotoko this summer for Swiss side Basle in a £425,000 deal. It won't be too long before he is worth far more.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Basle (Swi)
Country Ghana
Born August 22, 1989, in Sekondi-Takoradi
Previous clubs Sekondi Hasaacas, Asante Kotoko
International debut November 2009 v Tunisia
International caps 8 (0 goals)
Honours African Under-20 Championship 2009, Under-20 World Cup 2009

Lewis HOLTBY

Dreaming of Goodison Park

AS HIS NAME suggests, Holtby is not 100 per cent indigenously sourced. Born and raised in the Rhineland by a German mother and English father, the 19-year-old striker is, like his dad, an avowed Everton fan and has made no secret of his desire to one day play for them in the Premier League.

For the time being, though, he has more pressing priorities: delivering at representative level – which he undeniably did at the Under-20 World finals – and establishing himself at Schalke following a £2.5million move from second division Alemannia Aachen in the summer.

While Schalke boss Felix Magath has used him sparingly until now, it is in no way a reflection on Holtby's ability on either flank or in the hole behind the strikers. Magath is simply anxious not to burden him with too much, too soon.

"My goal is to turn him into a senior national team player," says Magath, who saw off virtually every leading German club to sign the youngster. "However, we must remember this is his first season in the Bundesliga. This is where the hard work really begins.

"Lewis has to find his own way, to be reliant on himself."

With Aachen for five years, Holtby was previously on the books of Borussia Monchengladbach, who in 2004 decided to let the then 13-year-old go, citing his lack of physical strength. They never learn, do they?

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Schalke
Country Germany
Born September 18, 1990, in Erkelenz
Previous club Alemannia Aachen

HUNGARY

Vladimir Koman

Another magical Magyar makes his mark

UKRAINE football fans would not have particularly enjoyed the sight of Koman scoring five goals and expertly skippering Hungary to the Under-20 World Cup bronze medal.

Born in the Ukraine western frontier town of Uzhhorod, he might have lined up on the international stage with the men from Kiev, Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk if his dad Volodymyr – who was once on Dynamo Kyiv's books – had not signed for Hungarian club Szombathelyi Haladas, located close to the Austrian border.

Hungary's federation can only be delighted that Koman junior decided to pledge himself to them. Loaned out by Sampdoria to fellow Serie A side Bari this season, Koman was nothing less than a Magyar marvel in Egypt. He is a composed finisher, a free-kick master – as he proved with a fine goal against Czech Republic – a refined passer and a vociferous team motivator whose will to win set the tone for the entire squad. How Hungary missed him when he was suspended for the semi-final defeat by Ghana.

The undisputed leader of an exceptional generation of Magyar talent – arguably the best generation to come out of Hungary since the 1966 World Cup – Koman has the potential to become one of the nation's best midfielders of the past 30 years; perhaps even better than the much-celebrated likes of Tibor Nyilasi and Lajos Detari. Certainly the 20-year-old has one ingredient those greats did not possess: ingrained combativity.

Koman has always cut a precocious figure. At Haladas, he broke into the pro ranks at 15 and continued to prosper beyond his age category on moving to Sampdoria the following year, making his Serie A bow against Torino in April 2007 at 17 and creating a goal for team-mate Emiliano Bonazzoli, after which Samp coach Walter Novellino enthused: "Koman gave a great performance today. You journalists didn't expect him to play, but I didn't see it as a risk.

"When he started training with us I noticed whenever he raised his head, he knew what to do with the ball. If a player is effective I don't care how old he is. He has personality and skill."

A vital component in the Samp youth team which won the national title in 2008, Koman was farmed out last term to second division Avellino. This season he is on loan again, at Bari, though coach Giampiero Ventura is reported to be far from impressed with him.

Perhaps Ventura needs to take another look.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

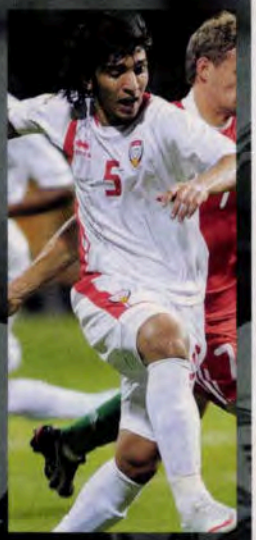
Club Bari (Ita, loan)
Country Hungary
Born March 16, 1989, in Uzhhorod (Ukr)
Previous clubs Szombathelyi Haladas, Sampdoria (Ita), Avellino (Ita, loan)

FIVE TO FOLLOW: UNDER-20 WORLD CUP STARLETS

Nick Bidwell profiles the youngsters who caught the eye in Eqypt

Club/Country Bani Yas/United Arab Emirates
Born July 3, 1989
Position Midfielder

Amer ABDULRAHMAN



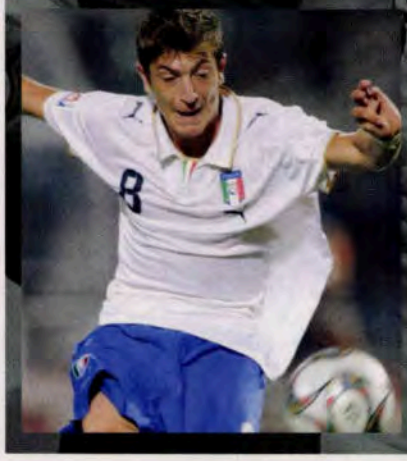
AFTER playing a prominent role in his nation's victory in last year's Asian Under-19 championship, the tiny playmaker kept it up with the Under-20s in Egypt, providing the creative fizz which took them to the quarter-finals. The "Zidane UAE" nom de plume is excessive, but he is not short of imagination or confidence. He plays his club football for second division Bani Yas and a move to a bigger stage must be on the cards soon.

Club/Country Deportivo Saprissa/Costa Rica
Born April 4, 1989
Position Goalkeeper

Esteban ALVARADO

RICHLY deserved the Golden Glove trophy as the best keeper at the tournament. Tall, commanding and boasting remarkable reflexes, he rescued his side on too many occasions to mention and made a substantial contribution to the Ticos' creditable fourth place. From the Limon province, he started out with Santos de Guapiles before moving, in 2006, to leading domestic side Deportivo Saprissa, where he is only third choice at the moment.

Club/Country Udinese/Italy
Born November 6, 1989
Position Midfielder



Andrea MAZZARANI

BY some margin the best of the *Azzurrini* bunch, he was anything but a one-trick pony in midfield, offering good distribution, intelligent breaks into forward positions and a large portion of fighting spirit. The young Roman started out at local minor league side Cisco and inexplicably did not appear on the radar of Serie A clubs before the summer of 2008, when Udinese swooped for him. He is currently on loan at second division Crotone.

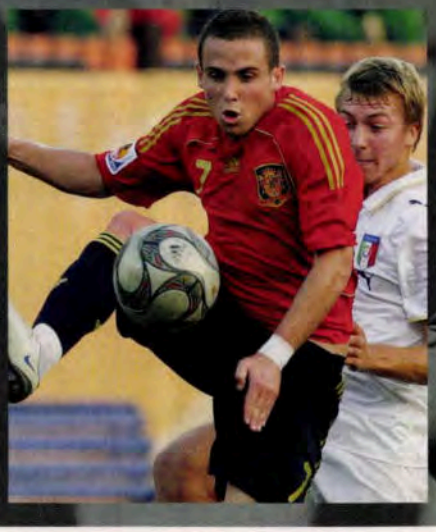
Club/Country Deportivo Tachira/Venezuela
Born May 20, 1990
Position Forward

Yonathan DEL VALLE

THE scorer of four goals in the finals, YDV proved himself not only a finisher of no little composure but he also caught the eye with his electric pace and dribbling ability, often striding out on the flanks or looking to run at defences from deep central positions. *"El Rapido"* plays for national champions Deportivo Tachira, who he joined in August 2008 from Maracaibo, though he admits he has his sights set on a transfer to Mexico or Spain. Already a full international, he made his debut in a World Cup qualifier against Peru.

Club/Country Valencia/Spain
Born April 26, 1989
Position Midfielder

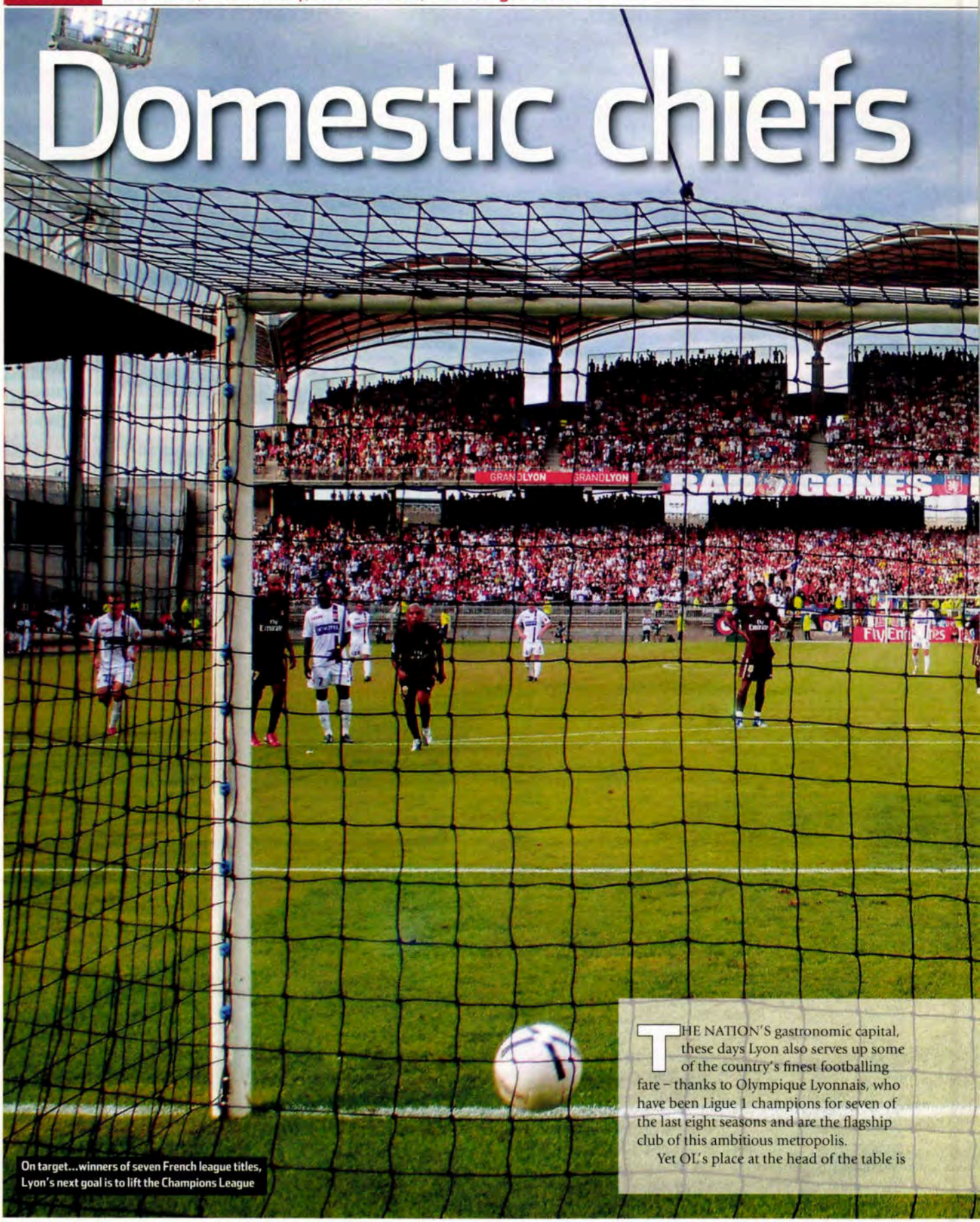
AARON Niguez



THE pocket-sized creative midfielder looked a class act in each of the four games he played in. Although he overdid the theatrics at times, there was much more to applaud: namely his pace, the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't ball skills and the Antonin Panenka-like chipped penalty in the loss to Italy in the round of 16. A product of Valencia's youth system, he has yet to feature in the first team, having spent recent years on loan at Xerez, Greek side Iraklis, Rangers in Scotland and now Celta Vigo.

LYON The clubs, the history, what to see, how to get there

Domestic chiefs



On target...winners of seven French league titles, Lyon's next goal is to lift the Champions League

THE NATION'S gastronomic capital, these days Lyon also serves up some of the country's finest footballing fare – thanks to Olympique Lyonnais, who have been Ligue 1 champions for seven of the last eight seasons and are the flagship club of this ambitious metropolis.

Yet OL's place at the head of the table is

Having devoured all before them in Ligue 1, Olympique Lyonnais are now hungry for success in Europe, writes Peterjon Cresswell

all down to one man: Jean-Michel Aulas.

The last person to chair the defunct G14 international elite, the 60-year-old Aulas has transformed a sleeping giant into a money-making machine that has become France's first credible European contender since Olympique Marseille back in the ignominious Bernard Tapie era. And, bizarrely, it was Tapie who got former handball player Aulas into top-level football in the first place.

The son of a columnist on the local daily newspaper *Lyon-Matin*, Aulas was invited to an after-show party for a business programme hosted by Tapie. Asked in casual conversation who should rescue once-proud OL from floundering in the second tier of French football, Tapie's reply was simple: "Aulas". Word soon spread, Aulas decided to pick up the challenge...and the rest is lucrative history.

Olympique Lyon were formed in 1950 following a merger between Lyon Olympique Universitaire (who had won

THE STADIUMS

1 STADE GERLAND
Built by celebrated local architect Tony Garnier in 1920, the stadium's main feature was two large concrete arches at either end which guarded tracks for running and cycling. With the foundation of OL in 1950, the cycle track was removed, and as the football team began to challenge for top honours so the athletics track went too. The two ends were rebuilt for the 1998 World Cup, bringing the capacity up to its current 41,000.

2 OL LAND
There are plans to build a new home for OL in Decines, half-an-hour east of Lyon, as part of France's bid for Euro 2016. The 62,000-capacity arena is expected to cost around £300million and should be ready by 2013.

the French title in 1910) and FC Lyon. The new club moved into Lyon Olympique Universitaire's stadium in the Gerland district of the city and enjoyed a brief spell of success in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, first under coach Louis Hon and then Aime Mignot. On the pitch, Fleury Di Nallo made over 400 appearances for the club and scored almost 200 goals, while fellow France international Marcel Aubour concentrated on keeping them out at the other end.

> **"Could this be the year OL finally get to take Europe's ultimate prize?"**

However, despite a string of big-name coaches, OL fell to Ligue 2 in 1983 – which is where Aulas found them four years later.

The man who took OL back up in 1989 was the current national coach, Raymond Domenech. Having been a French Cup-winner with OL in 1973, the strong-minded Domenech took them into Europe within two years of taking charge, before being replaced in 1993 by Jean Tigana, whose reputation helped bring in star signings such as Abedi Pele and Manuel Amoros.

In 1996 Bernard Lacombe became coach and he started the club on the path to what would become three consecutive top-three finishes at the turn of the century as Aulas set about building his empire.

A major brand

Having modernised the Stade Gerland to host half-a-dozen games at the 1998 World Cup, Aulas opened boutiques around the city and raised the club's profile as a major brand. With Jacques Santini as coach, OL won the League Cup and enjoyed a debut appearance in the Champions League in 2001.

Santini may have also guided OL to a first league title in 2002, but it was Paul Le Guen who turned the likes of Sidney Govou, Sylvain Wiltord and Brazilian dead-ball specialist Juninho into an all-conquering outfit. With Michael Essien as a defensive midfielder and Gregory Coupet in goal, OL were head

High flyer...OL bought France striker Gomis from rivals Saint-Etienne for £11million in the summer

The main man...Aulas

and shoulders above anything else in Ligue 1.

Sell-outs at the Gerland became common – particularly for the visits of Olympique Marseille, Paris Saint-Germain and the big European names in the Champions League – while rivals Saint-Etienne's return to the top flight revived the *Derby du Rhone* and OL's fan group, *Bad Gones*, gained a fiery reputation.

Former Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier maintained Lyon's unprecedented league-title run but he also failed to bring continental success. With the departure of Wiltord and Florent Malouda came a new hero: Karim Benzema, a local boy of Algerian descent who was a product of the club's youth academy, into which Aulas had pumped significant funds.

Benzema burst on to the scene in 2007 under incoming coach Alain Perrin, whose trust he repaid with 30-plus goals while forming a prolific strike force with Hatem Ben Arfa as OL registered their first league-and-cup double and won a record-breaking seventh straight championship.

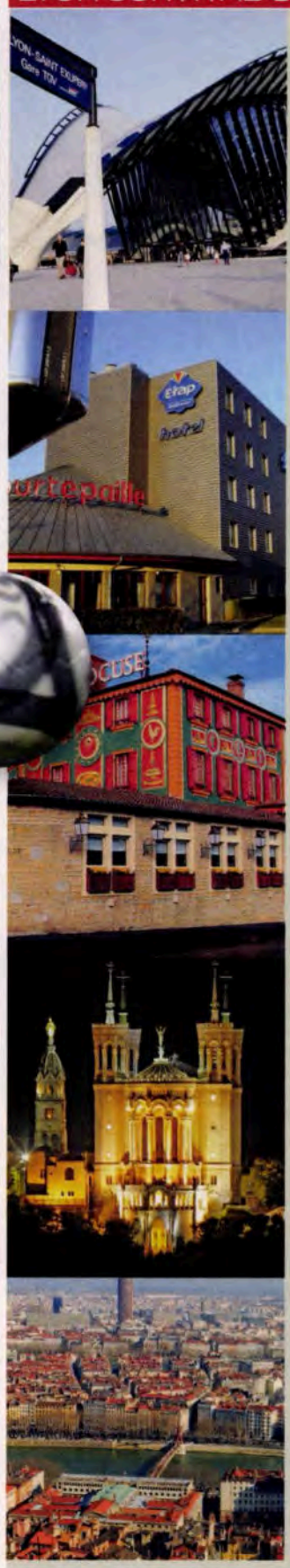
Although Ben Arfa was sold to Marseille and Perrin also moved on, eventually to Saint-Etienne, Benzema hung around for another season, under Claude Puel. But the weight of expectation for an eighth triumph proved too much and OL could only finish third last time out.

Benzema moved on in the summer, joining Real Madrid for an initial £30million, but Aulas has seen new talents emerge, such as prolific former Saint-Etienne striker Bafetimbi Gomis and 19-year-old Bosnian midfielder Miralem Pjanic.

Champions League victories at home to Fiorentina, away to Debrecen and against Liverpool at Anfield, plus a last-gasp equaliser in the return game against the English side, secured OL's place in the last-16 knockout round of this term's competition.

Having feasted on seven title triumphs over the course of the past eight seasons, could this be the year Aulas finally gets to take away Europe's ultimate club prize? ●

LYON SURVIVAL GUIDE



A French delicacy

● ARRIVAL & TRANSPORT

Lyon-Saint Exupery Airport (+33 826 80 08 26, www.lyonairport.com) is 16 miles from the city centre and connected by bus (single €9, return €16). A taxi costs around €40. There is a train station at the airport and two in town (Lyon Perrache and Lyon Part-Dieu), which are two hours from Paris. Public transport (www.tcl.fr) consists of a driverless metro, trams and buses.

● HOTELS & INFORMATION

Book accommodation on the tourist office website (www.lyon-france.fr) or at the office itself on Place Bellecour (+33 4 72 77 69 69). The Ibis, Novotel and Best Western chains all have branches near the stadium. The cheaper Etap Hotel (1 rue Jules Carteret, +33 8 92 68 30 79, www.etaphotel.com) is close by.

● EATING & DRINKING

As befitting the gastronomic capital of France, the city has many exceptional dining options. The most famous spot is Paul Bocuse (Rue de la Plage 40, +33 4 72 42 90 90), run by the celebrity chef of the same name. There are plenty of bars over Gallieni Bridge towards the Stade Gerland. For nightclubs, head for Quai Augagneur.

● DAYTIME ENTERTAINMENT

Old Lyon contains narrow, cobbled streets lined with *traboules* (alleyways used by silk workers and, later on, the war-time resistance). From Place St-Jean, with its cathedral and an astrological clock, take the funicular to the Basilique Notre-Dame de Fourviere. Presqu'Ile, between the rivers, features the grand squares of Bellecour and Place des Terreaux. For designer shops, stroll from Place Bellecour to Rue Emile Zola and Rue du President Edouard Herriot. The best markets for fresh produce can be found on Quai Saint-Antoine and La Croix-Rousse.

● MATCH DAY

Stade Gerland is located in the district of the same name, three miles south of the city centre near the Rhone, at the terminus of metro line B. Lyon Part-Dieu is on the same line, while bus no32 runs from Lyon Perrache station. The best seats are found in the main stand (the Tribune Jean Jaures). Opposite, the Tribune Jean Bouin has comfortable places for the neutral. OL fans create an atmosphere behind the goal in the Virage Nord, while visiting supporters are allocated sections of the Virage Sud. Obtain tickets from www.olweb.fr, the OL Store Gerland near the ground, the OL Store Lyon Centre (corner of rues Grolee and Jussieu) or branches of FNAC.

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

● Stade Gerland
Dec 9 Lyon v Debrecen (Champions League)
Dec 13 Lyon v Bordeaux
Dec 16 Lyon v Boulogne
Dec 23 Lyon v Montpellier

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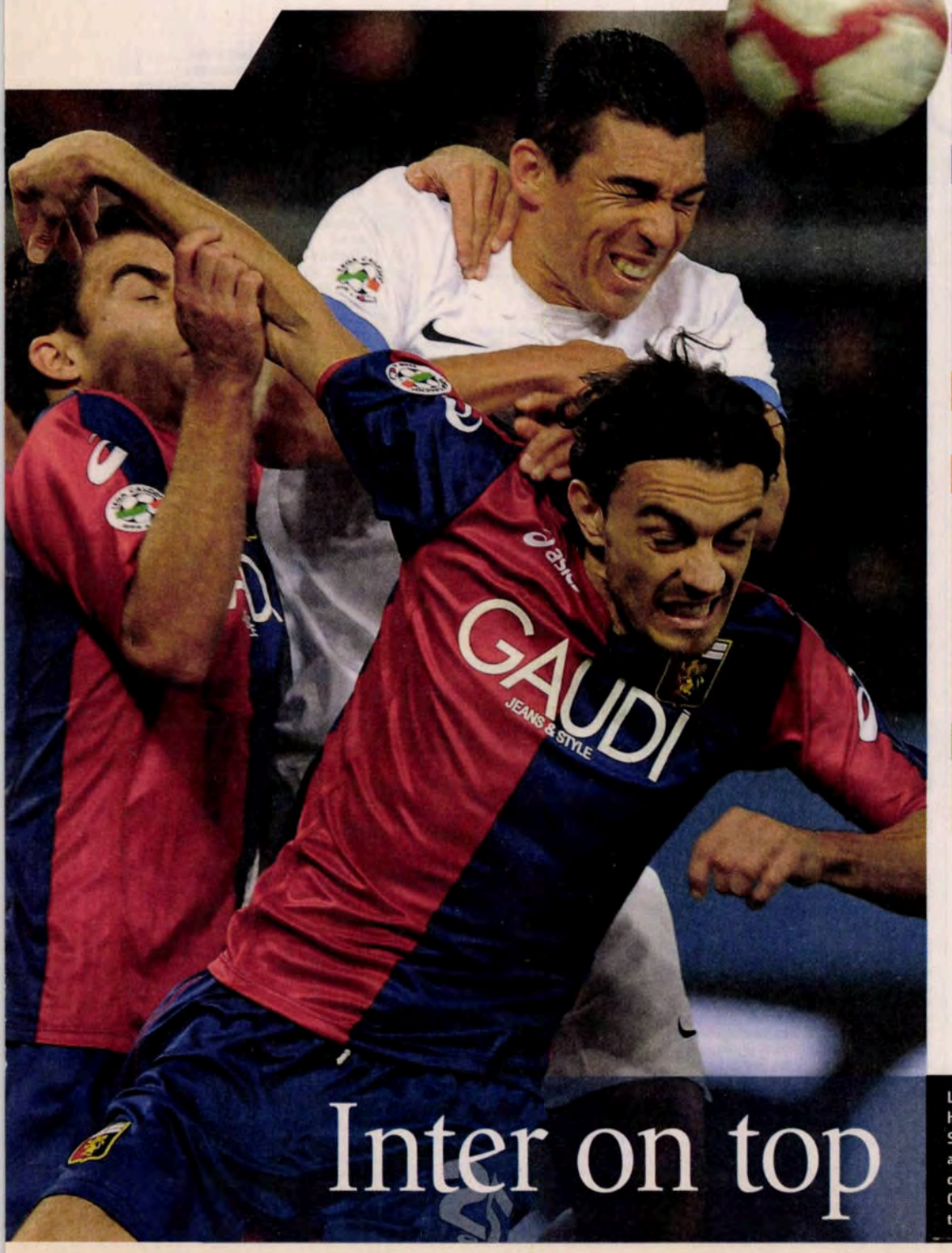


Inter on top

Lucio (centre) and Internazionale are head and shoulders above the rest of Serie A so far this season, winning 5-0 away to Genoa despite the best efforts of Sokratis Papastathopoulos (left) and Giuseppe Biava. More information and tables, page 95.

ARGENTINA

Match in Munich

Diego Maradona's side will face Germany in a pre-World Cup friendly at Munich's Allianz Arena on March 3. The fixture between the sides will be repeated in August 2012.

"Although they had a few problems in the South American World Cup qualifying campaign, they are still one of the strongest teams in the world in my eyes," said Germany coach Joachim Low.

BANGLADESH

SAFF Championship

The hosts will face Bhutan on the opening day of the South Asian Football Federation Championship, which is being staged in Dhaka from December 4 to 13.

Joining Bangladesh and Bhutan in Group B are Sri Lanka and Pakistan, while holders Maldives and four-time champions India are in Group A with Nepal and Afghanistan.

CHILE

Fans to vote on name

Argentinian coach Marcelo Bielsa, who has lead Chile to the World Cup finals for the first time in 12 years, is still so well respected by his own countrymen that his home-town club, Newell's Old Boys in Rosario, have asked their fans to vote on a plan to rename their stadium after the 54-year-old, who is a lifelong supporter of the club he once played for and coached.

"This is a gesture towards a person who did a lot for the club and today carries its name with pride around the world," said Newell's Old Boys secretary Pablo Morosano.

Well grounded ...Bielsa

RESULTS

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

Q (in tables) = qualified for the finals
P (in tables) = qualified for a play-off

AFRICA

(6 finals places, one of which goes automatically to South Africa as hosts)

3rd stage

Group winners qualify for the finals

Group A

Oct 10 - Yaounde
Cameroon 3 (Geremi 29, Makoun 46, Emana 54)
Togo 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 36,401. **Ref:** Kaoma (Zam)
Cameroon: Kameni - Geremi, R Song, Bedimo, Nkoulou, A Song, Makoun (Eyong 78), Nguemo (Somen 70), Emana, Webo (Mbia 70), Eto'o.
Togo: Obilale - Nibombe, Akakpo, Toure, Romao, F Ayite, Mathias, M Salifou (Gakpe 16), Amewou, Ahodikpe (Dossevi 55), Adebayor (J Ayite 58).

Oct 10 - Libreville
Gabon 3 (Erbate og 43, Mouloungui 65, Cousin 70)
Morocco 1 (Taarabt 88)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Doue (IvC)
Gabon: Ovono - Ambourouet, Ecuele, Moundounga, Brou, S Nguema (Mouloungui 58), Moubamba, Kessany, Djissikadie, Cousin (Issiemou 80), P Aubameyang (Meye 84).
Morocco: Lamyaghri - Benzoukane, El Moutaqui, Erbate, Kharja, Mahdoufi (El Ahmadi 82), Zemmama (Zairi 65), Safri, Taarabt, El Hamdaoui (Aboucherouane 46), Chamakh.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon	5	3	1	1	7	2	10
Gabon	5	3	0	2	9	6	9
Togo	5	1	2	2	2	7	5
Morocco	5	0	3	2	3	6	3

Remaining games
14.11.09 Morocco-Cameroon
14.11.09 Togo-Gabon

Group B

Oct 11 - Abuja
Nigeria 1 (Obinna 90)
Mozambique 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Abdel Rahman (Sud)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Yobo, Nwaneri, Ayila, Echiejile, Ajilore, Yusuf (Shittu 32), Eneramo (Obinna 63), Olofinjana, Odemwingie, Aiyegbeni (Martins 56).
Mozambique: Kapango - Hagi (Danito 88), Paito, Mexer, Genito (Josemar 79), Domingues, Miro, Campira, Mano (Fanuel 90+), Dario, Tico-Tico.

Oct 11 - Rades
Tunisia 1 (Jemaa 1)
Kenya 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Diatta (Sen)
Tunisia: Mathlouthi - Ghezal, Jemal, Ragued (Saihi 61), Jemaa, Ben Saada, Korbi, Mikari, Souissi, Nabil (Ben Khalfallah 46), Darragi (Chahed 76).
Kenya: W Ochieng - M Otieno, J Owino (Atieno 44), Mwangi, G Owino, Mugabi (Wetende 67), Mambo (Makacha 84), Opiyo, Atudo, Ooko, P Onyango.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia	5	3	2	0	7	3	11
Nigeria	5	2	3	0	6	2	9
Mozambique	5	1	1	3	2	5	4
Kenya	5	1	0	4	3	8	3

Remaining games
14.11.09 Kenya-Nigeria
14.11.09 Mozambique-Tunisia

Group C

Oct 10 - Chililabombwe
Zambia 0
Egypt 1 (Abd Rabo 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Djaoupe (Tog)
Zambia: Mweene - Sinkala, Hichani, Mbola, D Banda, Musonda (Sakuwaha 84), Sunzu, Kalaba, Chivuta (Mayuka 74), Katongo, Mbesuma (Singuluma 68).
Egypt: El Hadary - A Said (Abdel Fadil 85), H Said, Fathi, Gomaa, Moawad, A Hassan, Barakat (Raouf 58), Aboutraika, A Zaki (Ahmed Eid 79), Abd Rabo.

Oct 11 - Blida
Algeria 3 (Ghezzal 22, Belhadj 45, Ziani pen 90+)
Rwanda 1 (Mutesa 19)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Keita (Gui)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Bougherra, Yahia, Halliche, Belhadj, Matmour, Meghni (Yebda 52), Ziani, Saifi (Djebbour 51), Lemmouchia, Ghezzal (Ghilas 85).
Rwanda: Ndayishimiye - Sadou, Aniweta, Mutesa, Ndikumana, Ngaboyisibo, Mugiraneza, Kouame, Eale (Gatete 90), Niyonzima, Ouon.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	5	4	1	0	9	2	13
Egypt	5	3	1	1	7	4	10
Zambia	5	1	1	3	2	5	4
Rwanda	5	0	1	4	1	8	1

Remaining games
14.11.09 Egypt-Algeria
14.11.09 Rwanda-Zambia

Group D

Oct 11 - Cotonou
Benin 1 (Aoudou 89)
Ghana 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Lwanja (Mwi)
Benin: Djidonou - Ahoueya (Koukou 79), Chrysostome, Adenon, Pote (Kobena 75), Boco, Ogounbiyi, Singbo, Omotoyossi (Aoudou 82), S Tchomogo, Sessegnon.
Ghana: Kingson - Afful, Paintsil, Quartey, Essien, Appiah (Vorsah 80), S Yeboah (Dramani 70), E Addo, M Amoah, Kingston, Gyan (Boateng 86).

Oct 11 - Bamako
Mali 1 (Kanoute 89)
Sudan 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Benouza (Alg)
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - Soumare, M Diarra, Tamboura, A Coulibaly, Maiga (S Diarra 64), B Traore (Ndiaye 76), D Diakite, Samassa, Seydou Keita, Kanoute.
Sudan: Hafez - Ahmad, Yousif, Balla, Kafi, Abakar, Sami, M Abdalla (R Abdalla 31), Tahir, Idris (Maaz 87), El Tahir (Elimam 81).

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana (Q)	5	4	0	1	7	1	12
Mali	5	2	2	1	6	5	8
Benin	5	2	1	2	4	5	7
Sudan	5	0	1	4	1	7	1

Remaining games
14.11.09 Sudan-Benin
15.11.09 Ghana-Mali

Group E

Oct 10 - Blantyre
Malawi 1 (Ngwira 64)
Ivory Coast 1 (Drogba 67)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** El Achiri (Mor)
Malawi: Sanudi - Wadabwa, Sangala, Kamanga, M Msowoya, Nyirenda (C Msowoya 69), Mponda, D Banda (Ngambi 69), Ngwira, Mwafulirwa (Nyondo 86), Kamwendo.
Ivory Coast: Barry - Eboue, Bamba, Gosso, Boka, Demel, Zokora, Fae (Kouassi 69), Cisse (Drogba 65), E Kone (Y Toure 79), S Kalou.

Oct 11 - Accra, Ghana
Guinea 1 (M Bah 82)
Burkina Faso 2 (Dagano 37, Bamogo 59)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Ambaya (Lby)
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - A Camara, M Bah, Zayatte, I Camara, I Diallo (A Keita 71), Mansare (Constant 67), M Diallo, Feindouno, Kaba (Ibrahima Bangoura 61), Ismael Bangoura.
Burkina Faso: Diakite - Panandetiguiri, B Kone, M Tall, Koulibaly, Yameogo, Roumba, Kere, Bamogo (Koffi 59), Pitrolpa (Gnamou 86), Dagano (Bance 72).

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP E	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ivory Coast (Q)	5	4	1	0	16	4	13
Burkina Faso	5	3	0	2	9	11	9
Malawi	5	1	1	3	4	10	4
Guinea	5	1	0	4	7	11	3

Remaining games
14.11.09 Burkina Faso-Malawi
14.11.09 Ivory Coast-Guinea

ASIA

(4.5 finals places)

4th stage

Group 1

WC QUALS: ASIA – 4TH STAGE – GP 1 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia (Q)	8	6	2	0	12	1	20
Japan (Q)	8	4	3	1	11	6	15
Bahrain (P)	8	3	1	4	6	8	10
Qatar	8	1	3	4	5	14	6
Uzbekistan	8	1	1	6	5	10	4

Group 2

WC QUALS: ASIA – 4TH STAGE – GP 2 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea (Q)	8	4	4	0	12	4	16
North Korea (Q)	8	3	3	2	7	5	12
Saudi Arabia (P)	8	3	3	2	8	8	12
Iran	8	2	5	1	8	7	11
UAE	8	0	1	7	6	17	1

Bahrain and Saudi Arabia went into Asia play-off

Asia play-off

05.09.09 Bahrain-Saudi Arabia..... 0-0
09.09.09 Saudi Arabia-Bahrain..... 2-2
Agg 2-2; Bahrain on away goals – qualified to meet Oceania section winners New Zealand for a place in the finals (see Intercontinental Play-offs)

CONCACAF

(3.5 finals places)

4th stage

Oct 10 - San Jose
Costa Rica 4 (James og 26, Centeno 51, Saborio 61, 64)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Marrufo (USA)
Costa Rica: Navas - Sirias, Marshall, Barrantes, Marin, Herrera (V Nunez 76), Montero, Azofeifa, Ruiz (R Fonseca 57), Saborio, Centeno (Bolanos 68).
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - Leon, Thompson, Abu Bakr, James, Daniel (Tinto 62), Cupid, Noel (Jorsling 76), C Edwards, K Baptiste (Lawrence 70), Jones. *Sent off: James 66min.*

Oct 10 - San Pedro Sula
Honduras 2 (De Leon 47, 78)
United States 3 (Casey 50, 66, Donovan 71)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 37,000. **Ref:** Moreno (Pan)
Honduras: N Valladares - Sabillon, O Chavez, Figueroa, E Izaguirre, Alvarez (D Suazo 69), Thomas (R Nunez 75), W Palacios, De Leon (W Martinez 80), Costly, Pavon.
United States: Howard - Spector, Onyewu, Bocanegra, Bornstein, Holden (Cherundolo 90), Clark, Bradley, Donovan, Davies (Altidore 78), Casey (Feilhaber 83).

Oct 10 - Mexico City
Mexico 4 (Marvin Gonzalez og 25, Blanco 71, Palencia 85, Vela 90)
El Salvador 1 (Julio Martinez 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 104,000. **Ref:** Batres (Gtm)
Mexico: G Ochoa - Juarez, Marquez, Osorio, Salcido, Torrado, I Castro, Guardado (Barrera 89), Vela, Blanco (Palencia 78), Franco (Sabah 86).
El Salvador: Montes - Salazar, Henriquez, Julio Martinez, Marvin Gonzalez, Umanzor, Castillo, Sanchez, Alvarez (Rudis Corrales 48), Romero (Coreas 63), Quintanilla (Moscoco 80).

Oct 14 - San Salvador
El Salvador 0
Honduras 1 (Pavon 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** Salazar (USA)
El Salvador: Montes - Escobar, Flores, Marvin Gonzalez (Rudis Corrales 66), Umanzor, Castillo, Sanchez, Salazar, Alvarez, Reyes (Alas 72), Quintanilla (Romero 39).
Honduras: N Valladares - J Palacios, Norales, Alvarez (Turcios 65), E Izaguirre, Sabillon, Guevara, W Palacios, D Suazo (Thomas 84), De Leon, Pavon (Costly 76).

Oct 14 - Port of Spain
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (K Baptiste pen 23, 61)
Mexico 2 (Esqueda 57, Salcido 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Quesada (CR)
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - Leon, Primus, Lawrence, Thompson, Cupid, Jorsling (Theobald 77), Noel (Jones 77), Tinto (Hector 59), C Edwards, K Baptiste.
Mexico: G Ochoa - Magallon, Moreno, Salcido, Torrado, I Castro, Guardado (Barrera 46), Sabah (Esqueda 54), J A Castro, Vela, Palencia (Blanco 54).

It's all over...Lara

COLOMBIA

Lara says farewell

Coach Eduardo Lara resigned after the team failed to reach the World Cup finals for the third successive time. He will, however, continue to work with the federation's juniors.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Bilek replaces Hasek

Former Czechoslovakia and Czech Republic international midfielder Michal Bilek is the new national team coach.

The 44-year-old had been assistant to Ivan Hasek, who resigned after the country's failure to qualify for next year's World Cup finals.

IRAN

Boss admits he would accept Karimi back

Coach Afshin Ghotbi has said he would welcome back Ali Karimi to the national team if he wanted to change his mind about retiring.

"I have no doubt that we will be a better team with Karimi," said Ghotbi. "But it is his decision. I can only promise that the door is open to every player who is prepared to play."

Asia's player of the year in 2004 quit international football in June.

Heading back?...Karimi (left)

Oct 14 - Washington DC
United States 2 (Bradley 71, Bornstein 90+)
Costa Rica 2 (Ruiz 20, 23)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 26,243. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
United States: Howard - Cherundolo, Onyewu, Bocanegra, Bornstein, Holden (Rogers 68), Feilhaber (Torres 62), Bradley, Donovan, Casey (Cooper 78), Altidore.
Costa Rica: Navas - Montero, Marin, Marshall (Sequeira 90), Sirias (Diaz 73), Azofeifa, Centeno, Barrantes, Herrera, Saborio, Ruiz (Bolanos 82).

WC QUALS: CONCACAF – 4TH STAGE – FINAL							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA (Q)	10	6	2	2	19	13	20
Mexico (Q)	10	6	1	3	18	12	19
Honduras (Q)	10	5	1	4	17	11	16
Costa Rica (P)	10	5	1	4	15	15	16
El Salvador	10	2	2	6	9	15	8
Trinidad & Tob	10	1	3	6	10	22	6

Costa Rica to play fifth-best South American country Uruguay for a place in the finals (see Intercontinental Play-offs)

EUROPE

(13 finals places)

Group 1

Oct 10 - Copenhagen
Denmark 1 (J Poulsen 78)
Sweden 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 37,800. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Denmark: T Sorensen - Jacobsen, Agger, Kjaer, Jakobsen, C Poulsen, J Poulsen, Tomasson, Rommedahl, Martin Jorgensen (Silberbauer 46), Bendtner.
Sweden: Isaksson - M Nilsson (Rosenberg 88), Mellberg, Majstorovic, Safari, R Elm (Berg 80), A Svensson, Kallstrom, Holmen (S Larsson 63), H Larsson, Ibrahimovic.

Oct 10 - Lisbon
Portugal 3 (Simao 18, 79, Liedson 74)
Hungary 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,115. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Portugal: Eduardo - Bosingwa, Ricardo Carvalho, Bruno Alves, Duda, Simao (Miguel Veloso 81), Raul Meireles, Deco, Pedro Mendes, Liedson (Nuno Gomes 83), Cristiano Ronaldo (Nani 27).
Hungary: Babos - Bodnar, Gyepes, Vanczak, Juhasz, Vadocz (Priskin 56), B Toth, Huszti (Buzsaky 67), Gera, Dzsudzsak (Varga 84), Torghelle.

Oct 14 - Copenhagen
Denmark 0
Hungary 1 (Buzsaky 35)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 36,956. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Denmark: T Sorensen - Jacobsen, Agger, Jakobsen, Moller Christensen, C Poulsen, J Poulsen, Enevoldsen (Larsen 46), Tomasson (D Jensen 62), Rommedahl (Silberbauer 71), Bendtner.
Hungary: Babos - Bodnar, B Toth, Halmosi, Vanczak, Juhasz, Buzsaky (Huszti 76), Varga, Dzsudzsak (Priskin 89), Rudolf (Vadocz 87), Torghelle.

Oct 14 - Guimaraes
Portugal 4 (Nani 14, Simao 45, Miguel Veloso 52, Edinho 90)
Malta 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 29,350. **Ref:** Kelly (Ire)
Portugal: Eduardo - Bosingwa, Ricardo Carvalho, Pepe, Miguel Veloso, Pedro Mendes, Deco, Raul Meireles (Edinho 62), Nani (Joao Moutinho 73), Liedson (Nuno Assis 62), Simao.
Malta: Hogg - Manny Muscat, Said, Hutchinson, Azzopardi, S Bajada (Fenech 73), Scicluna, Pace, Cohen (Failla 23), Briffa (Sammut 88), M Mifsud.

Oct 14 - Stockholm
Sweden 4 (Mellberg 6, 42, Berg 40, A Svensson 86)
Albania 1 (Salihi 57)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 25,342. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Sweden: Isaksson - M Nilsson, Mellberg, Majstorovic, Safari, R Elm, A Svensson, S Larsson, Kallstrom (D Andersson 21), Elmander (Berg 37), Ibrahimovic (Rosenberg 77).
Albania: Ujkani - Beqiri, Cana, Curri, Skela, Dallku, Haxhi (Hyka 22), Bogdani (Berisha 87), Bulku, Duro, Salihi (Kapllani 79).

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 1 – FINAL							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark (Q)	10	6	3	1	16	5	21
Portugal (P)	10	5	4	1	17	5	19
Sweden	10	5	3	2	13	5	18
Hungary	10	5	1	4	10	8	16
Albania	10	1	4	5	6	13	7
Malta	10	0	1	9	0	26	1

Group 2

Oct 10 - Athens
Greece 5 (Gekas 4, pen 47, 57, 90, Samaras 73)
Latvia 2 (Verpakovskis 12, 40)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 18,981. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
Greece: Tzorvas - Seitaridis, Papastathopoulos, Moras, Torosidis, Katsouranis, Tziolis (Amanatidis 46), Salpigidis (Patsatzoglou 46), Karagounis (Pliatsikas 89), Samaras, Gekas.
Latvia: Vanins - Gorkss, Laizans, Ivanovs, Klava, Kacanovs, Cauna, Kolesnicenko, Karlsons (Grebis 71), Rubins (Solonicins 78), Verpakovskis (Pereplotkins 84).

Oct 10 - Tel Aviv
Israel 3 (Barda 22, 70, Ben Dayan 65)
Moldova 1 (Calincov 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,700. **Ref:** Blom (Hol)
Israel: Awat - Yadin, Strool, Ben Dayan, Ben Haim, Cohen, Vermouth, Ziv (Saban 30), Sahar (Schechter 60), Benayoun, Barda (Colatti 72).
Moldova: Stanislav Namasco - Savinov, Golovatenco, Epureanu, Lascencov, Bulat, Catinsus, Calincov, Bugaiov (Suvorov 74), Cebotaru (Andronic 67), Sofroni (Ovseannicov 79).

Oct 10 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 0
Switzerland 3 (Senderos 6, 8, Huggel 22)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 8,031. **Ref:** Iturralde Gonzalez (Spa)
Luxembourg: Joubert - Kintziger, Blaise, Peters, Payal, Mutsch, Strasser, Bettmer, Laterza (A Leweck 46), Collette (Janisch 73), Kitenge (Pupovac 59).
Switzerland: Benaglio - Lichtsteiner, Senderos, Von Bergen, Spycher, Vonlanthen (Derdiyok 65), Barnetta (Ziegler 82), Inler, Huggel, Frei (Yakin 65), Nkufo.

Oct 14 - Athens
Greece 2 (Torosidis 30, Gekas 33)
Luxembourg 1 (Papadopoulos og 90)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 13,932. **Ref:** Ceferin (Sln)
Greece: Sifakis - Vyntra (Ninis 83), Patsatzoglou, Papadopoulos, Kyrgiakos (Moras 43), Torosidis, Spyropoulos, Fotakis (Pliatsikas 46), Salpigidis, Karagounis, Gekas.
Luxembourg: Joubert - Kintziger (Martino 80), Blaise, Peters, Payal, Hoffmann, Strasser, Mutsch, Bettmer, Janisch (A Leweck 46), Kitenge (Pupovac 73). *Sent off: Payal 58min.*

Oct 14 - Riga
Latvia 3 (Rubins 32, 44, Grebis 76)
Moldova 2 (Ovseannicov 25, Sofroni 90)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 3,800. **Ref:** Hyytia (Fin)
Latvia: Vanins - Klava, Ivanovs, Astafjevs, Kacanovs, Cauna, Gorkss, Kolesnicenko (Laizans 74), Karlsons (Grebis 69), Rubins (Solonicins 63), Verpakovskis.
Moldova: Stanislav Namasco - Armas (Andronic 81), Epureanu, Sergiu Namasco, Lascencov, Golovatenco, Calincov, Catinsus, Bugaiov (Suvorov 70), Savinov, Ovseannicov (Sofroni 76). *Sent off: Lascencov 30min.*

Oct 14 - Basle
Switzerland 0
Israel 0
Att: 38,500. **Ref:** Tudor (Rom)
Switzerland: Wolfli - Lichtsteiner, Senderos, Grichting, Spycher, Padalino, Barnetta, Inler, Fernandes, Derdiyok (Frei 70), Nkufo.
Israel: Awat - Yadin, Strool, Kayal, Ben Haim, Saban, Ziv, Cohen, Benayoun, Barda (Vermouth 85), Colatti (Schechter 68). *Sent off: Yadin 60min.*

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 2 – FINAL							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland (Q)	10	6	3	1	18	8	21
Greece (P)	10	6	2	2	20	10	20
Latvia	10	5	2	3	18	15	17
Israel	10	4	4	2	20	10	16
Luxembourg	10	1	2	7	4	25	5
Moldova	10	0	3	7	6	18	3

Group 3

Oct 10 - Prague
Czech Republic 2 (Necid 51, Plasil 72)
Poland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 14,010. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Czech Republic: Cech - Hubschman, Pospech, Hubnik, Jankulovski, Sivok, Pudil (Stajner 87), Papadopulos (Necid 46), Rosicky (Jarolim 78), Plasil, Baros.
Poland: Kowalewski - Polczak, Glowacki, Gancarczyk, Obraniak, M Lewandowski, Blaszczykowski (Peszko 67), Rzezniczak, Grosicki (Janczyk 81), Iwanski, Jelen (R Lewandowski 64).

Oct 10 - Bratislava
Slovakia 0
Slovenia 2 (Birsa 56, Pecnik 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,800. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Slovakia: Mucha - Pekarik, Skrtel, Durica, Zabavnik, Weiss, Hamsik, Strba (Novak 84), Stoch, Vittek (Jendrisek 80), Jakubko (Karhan 46).
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Brecko, Cesar, Suler, Jokic, Radosavljevic, Koren, Birsa (Stevanovic 90+), Kirm, Novakovic, Dedic (Pecnik 78).

Oct 14 - Prague
Czech Republic 0
Northern Ireland 0
Att: 8,002. **Ref:** Duhamel (Fra)
Czech Republic: Cech - Hubschman, Pospech, Hubnik, Jankulovski, Sivok, Jarolim (Papadopulos 83), Plasil, Rosicky (Stajner 72), Necid (Hlousek 59), Baros.
Northern Ireland: Taylor - McAuley, Craigan, Hughes, Baird, McGivern, McGinn, Davis, Johnson (Kirk 83), McCann (O'Connor 80), Healy (Feeney 69).

Oct 14 - Chorzow
Poland 0
Slovakia 1 (Gancarczyk og 3)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
Poland: Dudek - Obraniak, Glowacki, Rzezniczak, Gancarczyk, Bieniuk, Blaszczykowski, M Lewandowski, Guerreiro (Peszko 60), Pawel Brozek (Janczyk 86), Jelen (R Lewandowski 68).
Slovakia: Mucha - Pekarik, Petras, Strba, Salata, Kozak (Karhan 85), Weiss (Novak 65), Hamsik, Kopunek, Jendrisek, Sestak (Svento 74).

Oct 14 - Serravalle
San Marino 0
Slovenia 3 (Novakovic 24, Stevanovic 68, Suler 81)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,745. **Ref:** Szabo (Hun)
San Marino: A Simoncini - F Vitaioli, D Simoncini, Albani, Mauro Marani, Berretti (Bugli 46), M Vitaioli, Michele Marani, Valentini (Cervellini 77), Manuel Marani, Selva (Rinaldi 62).
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Brecko (Ilic 85), Cesar, Suler, Jokic, Kirm, Radosavljevic, Dedic (Ljubijankic 51), Stevanovic (Krhin 85), Novakovic, Birsa.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 3 – FINAL							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slovakia (Q)	10	7	1	2	22	10	22
Slovenia (P)	10	6	2	2	18	4	20
Czech Rep	10	4	4	2	17	6	16
N Ireland	10	4	3	3	13	9	15
Poland	10	3	2	5	19	14	11
San Marino	10	0	0	10	1	47	0

Group 4

Oct 10 - Helsinki
Finland 2 (Porokara 5, Moisander 77)
Wales 1 (Bellamy 17)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)
Finland: Jaaskelainen - Pasanen, Hyypia, Tihinen, Moisander, Sparv, Porokara, Kolkka (Hamalainen 68), Litmanen (A Eremenko 90), R Eremenko, Johansson (Kuqi 88).
Wales: Hennessey - Gunter, J Collins, Nyatanga (Eardley 83), Bale, Williams, Edwards, Vaughan, Ramsey, Church (Vokes 62), Bellamy.

Oct 10 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Azerbaijan 2 (Javadov 55, Mammadov 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,635. **Ref:** Radovanovic (Mne)
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Ritzberger (Christen 82), Oehri, Rechsteiner, Kieber, D'Elia, Hasler, S Buchel (T Beck 68), Rohrer (R Beck 60), Burgmeier, R Buchel.
Azerbaijan: Agayev - Abishov, Shukurov, Allahverdiyev, Medvedev (Malikov 90+), Nadirov (Sadigov 46), Javadov (Huseynov 90), Akhtyamov, Chertoganov, Mammadov, Levin.

Oct 10 - Moscow
Russia 0
Germany 1 (Klose 35)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 72,100. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Russia: Akinfeev - Anyukov, Ignashevich, V Berezutsky, Zhirkov, Semshov (Pogrebnyak 77), Denisov (Torbinsky 46), Bystrov, Zyryanov, Arshavin, Kerzhakov (Pavlyuchenko 55).
Germany: Adler - Boateng, Mertesacker, Westermann, Lahm, Rolfes, Ballack, Schweinsteiger, Ozil (A Friedrich 72), Podolski (Trochowski 85), Klose (Gomez 89). *Sent off: Boateng 69min.*

Oct 14 - Baku
Azerbaijan 1 (Javadov 53)
Russia 1 (Arshavin 13)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Azerbaijan: Agayev - Malikov, Shukurov, Abishov, Medvedev (Huseynov 73), Levin, Sadigov (Nadirov 46), Mammadov, Chertoganov, Abasov, Javadov.
Russia: Akinfeev - Yanbaev, Ignashevich, A Berezutsky, Bilyaletdinov, Torbinsky, Rebko (Denisov 64), Dzagoev, Semak, Bystrov (Bukharov 64), Arshavin.

JAMAICA

Reggae Boy murdered

Oraine Simpson, who played five times for Jamaica, was stabbed to death in his home town of Kingston following an argument.

The 26-year-old midfielder, who played for local club side Tivoli Gardens, made his international debut for the Reggae Boyz against Australia in 2005.

MEXICO

Aguirre seeks World Cup warm-up in Europe

Javier Aguirre's side are planning a tour of Europe before next summer's World Cup finals.

The squad will leave for Europe on May 19 and hope to play three friendlies.

"We have made contacts with leading national teams like Italy, Germany, Holland, England and Belgium," said Nestor De la Torre, the Mexican Football Federation's director general of national teams.

No end result...Dobrovolskiy

MOLDOVA

It's a no win situation

Igor Dobrovolskiy has stepped down as coach of the national team after he failed to lead his side to victory in their 10 World Cup qualifying games in Europe's Group 2.

Breaking the law...Tadic

Oct 14 - Hamburg
Germany 1 (Podolski 90)
Finland 1 (Johansson 11)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 51,500. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Germany: Adler - Beck, A Friedrich, Westermann, Lahm, Hitzlsperger (Gentner 46), Trochowski, Ballack (Özil 46), Podolski, Cacau, Gomez (Klose 77).
Finland: Jaaskelainen - Lampi, Hyypia, Heikkinen, Moisander, Hamalainen (Kolkka 66), Porokara (Kuqi 72), Sparv, Litmanen (Nyman 87), R Eremenko, Johansson.

Oct 14 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Wales 2 (Vaughan 16, Ramsey 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,858. **Ref:** Kaldma (Est)
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Ritzberger, Oehri, Rechsteiner, Kieber, D'Elia, Hasler (Christen 72), Rohrer (R Beck 36), R Buchel (Polverino 70), Eberle, M Frick.
Wales: Myhill - Gunter (Eardley 88), J Collins, Morgan, Bale (Nyatanga 84), Williams, Vaughan, Edwards (King 80), Ramsey, Church, Easter.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany (Q)	10	8	2	0	26	5	26
Russia (P)	10	7	1	2	19	6	22
Finland	10	5	3	2	14	14	18
Wales	10	4	0	6	9	12	12
Azerbaijan	10	1	2	7	4	14	5
Liechtenstein	10	0	2	8	2	23	2

Group 5

Oct 10 - Yerevan
Armenia 1 (Arzumanyan 58)
Spain 2 (Fabregas 33, Mata 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,500. **Ref:** Jech (Cze)
Armenia: Berezovsky - K Mkrtchyan, Hovsepyan, Arzumanyan, Yedigaryan (Arakelyan 74), Mkoyan, Agvan Mkrtchyan, Pinheiro (Dashyan 66), Arman Karamyan, Artavazd Karamyan, Goharyan (Melkonyan 60).
Spain: Reina - Sergio Ramos, Puyol, Marchena (Pique 46), Monreal, Cazorla, Senna, Xavi, Fabregas, Mata (Iniesta 67), Fernando Torres (Negredo 55).

Oct 10 - Brussels
Belgium 2 (E Mpenza 7, 84)
Turkey 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,131. **Ref:** Trefoloni (Ita)
Belgium: Bailly - Swerts, Vermaelen, Vertonghen, Van Buyten, Lombaerts, Mirallas (Hazard 74), Lamad (Mudingayi 78), Fellaini, Dembele, E Mpenza (De Sutter 89).
Turkey: Volkan Demirel - Servet, Gokhan Gonul, Hamit Altintop, Hakan Balta, Onder, Ayhan (Kazim 61), Ceyhun (Semih 46), Tuncay, Nuri, Nihat (Yusuf 71).

Oct 10 - Tallinn
Estonia 0
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Dzeko 30, Ibisevic 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,450. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Estonia: Pareiko - Jaager, Kruglov, Dmitrijev, Rahn, Barengrub, Klavan, Puri, Vassiljev, Kink (Purje 73), Voskoboinikov (Saag 60).
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Hasagic (Begovic 90) - Spahic, Muratovic (Berberovic 85), Rahimic, Salihovic, Nadarevic, Ibricic, Jahic, Misimovic, Ibisevic, Dzeko.

Oct 14 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Dzeko 90, Misimovic 90+)
Spain 5 (Pique pen 13, Silva 14, Negredo 50, 55, Mata 89)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 13,500. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Supic - Spahic, Muratovic (Vladavic 67), Rahimic (Bajramovic 46), Pjanic, Nadarevic, Salihovic (Hrgovic 73), Jahic, Misimovic, Ibisevic, Dzeko.
Spain: Casillas - Iraola, Albiol, Pique (Sergio Ramos 77), Capdevila, Busquets, Xabi Alonso, Silva (Mata 82), Iniesta (Senna 67), Negredo, Riera.

Oct 14 - Tallinn
Estonia 2 (Piiroja 30, Vassiljev 67)
Belgium 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,680. **Ref:** Vollquartz (Den)
Estonia: Pareiko - Jaager, Kruglov, Dmitrijev, Rahn, Piiroja (Morozov 63), Vassiljev, Saag (Voskoboinikov 72), Vunk, Lindpere, Kink (Puri 60).
Belgium: Bailly - Swerts (De Sutter 76), Vermaelen, Vertonghen, Van Buyten (Alderweireld 46), Lombaerts, Mirallas, Lamad, Mudingayi (Buffel 46), Dembele, E Mpenza.

Oct 14 - Bursa
Turkey 2 (Halil Altintop 16, Servet 28)
Armenia 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,200. **Ref:** Hansson (Swe)
Turkey: Volkan Demirel (Rustu 90) - Servet, Gokhan Gonul, Hamit Altintop (Kazim 83), Ismail, Ceyhun, Emre Belozoglu, Ayhan, Arda, Tuncay (Ibrahim Kas 46), Halil Altintop. *Sent off: Ceyhun 33min.*
Armenia: Berezovsky - K Mkrtchyan, Hovsepyan, Arzumanyan, Goharyan (Melkonyan 46), Mkoyan, Agvan Mkrtchyan, Arakelyan (Pinheiro 58), Arman Karamyan (Kakosyan 77), Artavazd Karamyan, Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 5 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain (Q)	10	10	0	0	28	5	30
Bosnia-H (P)	10	6	1	3	25	13	19
Turkey	10	4	3	3	13	10	15
Belgium	10	3	1	6	13	20	10
Estonia	10	2	2	6	9	24	8
Armenia	10	1	1	8	6	22	4

Group 6

Oct 10 - Brest
Belarus 4 (Bordachev 23, Kalachev 69, 90, Kovel 86)
Kazakhstan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 9,530. **Ref:** Ennjimmi (Fra)
Belarus: Zhevnov - Kulchy (Rodionov 90), Yurevich, Kalachev, Verkhovtsov, Omelyanchuk, Kornilenko, Bordachev (Krivets 83), Shitov, Sosnovsky, Kutuzov (Kovel 73).
Kazakhstan: Mokin - Logvinenko, Kislitsyn, Karpovich, Kirov, Abdulin, Averchenko, Kukeyev, Skorykh (Erbes 79), Baltiyev (Nusserbayev 61), Khiznichenko.

Oct 10 - Dnipropetrovsk
Ukraine 1 (Nazarenko 30)
England 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 31,000. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Kucher, Kobin, Rakitskyi, Khacheridi, Gai, Tymoshchuk, Nazarenko (Yarmolenko 67), Rotan, Shevchenko (Husiev 90), Milevskyi.
England: Green - Johnson, Ferdinand, Terry, A Cole, Lennon (James 12), Carrick, Lampard, Gerrard (Milner 46), Rooney, Heskey (C Cole 72). *Sent off: Green 12min.*

Oct 14 - Andorra La Vella
Andorra 0
Ukraine 6 (Shevchenko 22, Husiev 61, I Lima og 69, Rakitskyi 80, Selezniov 81, Yarmolenko 83)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 820. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
Andorra: Gomes - Martinez, Silva, I Lima, Maneiro, Ayala, Pujol, Andorra (G Garcia 89), Vales, Juli Sanchez (Riera 79), Jimenez (Moreno 74).
Ukraine: Pyatov - Mikhalik, Rakitskyi, Khacheridi, Kucher, Kobin, Husiev, Yarmolenko, Nazarenko (Aliyev 74), Shevchenko (Gai 74), Milevskyi (Selezniov 76).

Oct 14 - Wembley
England 3 (Crouch 4, 76, Wright-Phillips 60)
Belarus 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 76,897. **Ref:** Cardoso Batista (Por)
England: Foster - Johnson, Ferdinand, Terry, Bridge (Milner 78), Lennon (Beckham 58), Lampard, Barry, Wright-Phillips, Agbonlahor (C Cole 66), Crouch.
Belarus: Zhevnov - Kulchy, Yurevich, Omelyanchuk, Kalachev, Verkhovtsov, Kornilenko (Kovel 76), Shitov, Sosnovsky, Bordachev (Kashevsky 83), Kutuzov (Rodionov 46).

Oct 14 - Astana
Kazakhstan 1 (Khiznichenko 26)
Croatia 2 (Vukojevic 10, Kranjcar 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,250. **Ref:** Circhetta (Swi)
Kazakhstan: Mokin - Logvinenko, Kislitsyn, Abdulin, Kirov, Erbes (Baltiyev 90), Averchenko, Nusserbayev (Malinin 76), Skorykh, Nurgaliyev (Kukeyev 54), Khiznichenko.
Croatia: Runje - Corluka, Kovac, Vukojevic, Pranjic, Srna (Pokrivac 90+), Kranjcar, Lovren, Mandzukic (Bilic 63), Rakitic, Klasnic (Jelavic 76).

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 6 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England (Q)	10	9	0	1	34	6	27
Ukraine (P)	10	6	3	1	21	6	21
Croatia	10	6	2	2	19	13	20
Belarus	10	4	1	5	19	14	13
Kazakhstan	10	2	0	8	11	29	6
Andorra	10	0	0	10	3	39	0

Group 7

Oct 10 - Innsbruck
Austria 2 (Janko 16, Wallner pen 80)
Lithuania 1 (Stankevicius 66)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,200. **Ref:** Gumienny (Blg)
Austria: Payer - Dragovic, Ulmer, Pehlivan, Schiemer, Kavlak, Scharner, Prager (Drazan 57), Beichler (Baumgartlinger 57), Wallner, Janko (Maierhofer 73).
Lithuania: Karcemarskas - Semberas, Kijanskas, Alunderis (Luksa 82), Dedura, Stankevicius, Sernas, Razanauskas (Kalonas 46), Panka (Trakys 88), E Cesnauskis, Danilevicius.

Oct 10 - Guingamp
France 5 (Gignac 34, 39, Gallas 53, Anelka 85, Benzema 87)
Faroe Islands 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,755. **Ref:** Malek (Pol)
France: Mandanda - Sagna, Gallas, Abidal, Evra, L Diarra, Toulalan (Sissoko 62), Govou (Malouda 62), Anelka, Henry, Gignac (Benzema 73).
Faroe Islands: Mikkelsen - Jann Petersen (Naes 64), a Bo, R Jacobsen (A Olsen 79), Davidsen, Gregersen, Benjaminsen, Lokin, C Jacobsen, Atli Danielsen, S Olsen (B Olsen 90).

Oct 10 - Belgrade
Serbia 5 (Zigic 36, Pantelic 50, Kuzmanovic 77, Jovanovic 87, 90)
Romania 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 39,839. **Ref:** Kapitanis (Cyp)
Serbia: Stojkovic - Ivanovic, Vidic (Subotic 73), Lukovic (Dragutinovic 46), Kolarov, Stankovic, Milijas (Kuzmanovic 64), Krasic, Jovanovic, Pantelic, Zigic.
Romania: Coman - Maftei, Chivu, Radoi, Rat, Apostol, Adrian Cristea, Ghioane (Goian 60), Daciam, Marica (Bucur 60), Mutu (Andrei Cristea 75). *Sent off: Chivu 85min.*

Oct 14 - Saint-Denis
France 3 (Benzema 18, Henry pen 26, Gignac 66)
Austria 1 (Janko 49)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 78,099. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
France: Lloris - Fanni, Squillaci, Escude, Clichy, Govou, Sissoko, A Diarra, Malouda, Henry (Gignac 51), Benzema (Gomis 79).
Austria: Payer (Gratzei 46) - Dragovic, Fuchs (Alaba 80), Pehlivan, Kavlak, Patocka, Scharner, Baumgartlinger, Jantscher, Maierhofer (Hoffer 46), Janko.

Oct 14 - Marijampole
Lithuania 2 (Kalonas pen 20, Stankevicius pen 68)
Serbia 1 (Z Tosic 60)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Guenov (Bul)
Lithuania: Karcemarskas - Pilibaitis, Kijanskas, Dedura, Ivaskevicius, Klimavicius, Stankevicius, Panka, Sernas (Trakys 89), Mikoliunas (Luksa 67), Kalonas (Razanauskas 82).
Serbia: Disljenkovic - Ivanovic, Subotic, Dragutinovic, Obradovic (Lukovic 61), Krasic (Z Tosic 46), Kacar, Petrovic, Jovanovic, Pantelic (Ninkovic 73), Zigic.

Oct 14 - Piatra-Neamt
Romania 3 (Apostol 16, Bucur 65, Mazilu 87)
Faroe Islands 1 (a Bo 83)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Gvardis (Rus)
Romania: Pantilimon - Panin, Goian (Gazamaz 25), Radoi, Rat, Apostol, Bucur (Andrei Cristea 76), Daciam, Grigore, Mara, Marica (Mazilu 82).
Faroe Islands: Mikkelsen - Naes, a Bo, R Jacobsen (A Hansen 73), Atli Danielsen, Gregersen, Benjaminsen (C Jacobsen 81), Holst (Lokin 70), S Samuelsen, a Borg, S Olsen.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 7 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Serbia (Q)	10	7	1	2	22	8	22
France (P)	10	6	3	1	18	9	21
Austria	10	4	2	4	14	15	14
Lithuania	10	4	0	6	10	11	12
Romania	10	3	3	4	12	18	12
Faroe Islands	10	1	1	8	5	20	4

Group 8

Oct 10 - Larnaca
Cyprus 4 (Charalambidis 11, 20, M Konstantinou 58, Aloneftis 78)
Bulgaria 1 (Berbatov 44)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 3,700. **Ref:** Allaerts (Blg)
Cyprus: Avgousti - Christou, Avraam, Makrides, Satsias, Dobrasinovic, C Michael, Elia (Nikolaou 75), Charalambidis, Aloneftis (Efrem 86), M Konstantinou (Papathanasiou 89).
Bulgaria: Ivankov (Mihaylov 68) - I Ivanov, Nikolov, Angelov, K Stoyanov, Minev, Georgiev, S Petrov (Yanev 68), Bozhinov (Domovchiyski 62), M Petrov, Berbatov.

Oct 10 - Podgorica
Montenegro 2 (Batak 14, Delibasic 78)
Georgia 1 (Dvalishvili 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,420. **Ref:** Dereli (Tur)
Montenegro: Poleksic - Basa, Batak, Novakovic (Kascelan 71), Drincic, Damjanovic (Delibasic 61), Zverotic, Pejovic (Jovanovic 46), Vukcevic, Boskovic, Jovetic.
Georgia: Lomaia - Lobjanidze, Sanaia (Popkhadze 79), Gelashvili (Lipartia 67), Kaladze, Khmaladze, Khizanishvili, Razmadze, Merebashvili (Odikadze 76), A Iashvili, Dvalishvili.

SERBIA

Trio charged under anti-hooligan laws

Belgrade police have charged the country's president Boris Tadic, football association chief Tomislav Karadzic and sports minister Snezana Samardzic-Markovic with violating the country's anti-hooligan laws after Serbia beat Romania 5-0.

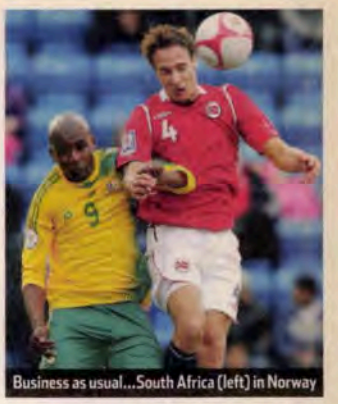
The trio opened a bottle of champagne in a VIP lounge at Red Star Belgrade's stadium to celebrate their country's qualification for the World Cup finals – which caused charges to be filed to a magistrate in Belgrade for "violating the law preventing violence and indecent behaviour at sports matches".

The law prohibits the sale or consumption of alcohol in stadiums and arenas.

SOUTH AFRICA

Hosts win at last

Bafana Bafana ended a run of six successive defeats with a narrow 1-0 victory over Madagascar. However, they were beaten again next time out by Norway.



Business as usual...South Africa (left) in Norway

40,000 Republic of Ireland fans expected to travel to Paris for the away leg of their play-off against France

Oct 10 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 2 (Whelan 8, St Ledger 87)
Italy 2 (Camoranesi 26, Gilardino 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 70,640. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Rep Ireland: Given - O'Shea, Dunne, St Ledger, Kilbane, Lawrence, Whelan (Rowlands 70), Andrews, McGeady (S Hunt 78), Doyle (Best 66), Keane.
Italy: Buffon - Zambrotta, Legrottaglie, Chiellini, Grosso (Bocchetti 76), Camoranesi, De Rossi, Pirlo, Palombo (Pepe 89), Iaquinta, Di Natale (Gilardino 76).

Oct 14 - Sofia
Bulgaria 6 (Berbatov 6, 23, 35, M Petrov 14, 44, Angelov 31)
Georgia 2 (Dvalishvili 34, Kobiashvili pen 51)
HT: 6-1. **Att:** 700. **Ref:** Jakobsson (Ice)
Bulgaria: Mihaylov - Minev, Angelov (Bozhinov 78), Nikolov, K Stoyanov (Bandalovski 46), Rangelov (Ivan Stoyanov 64), I Ivanov, Georgiev, Yanev, M Petrov, Berbatov.
Georgia: Lomaia (Mamaladze 29) - Lobjanidze, Sanaia (Merebashvili 78), Kaladze, Khizanishvili, Razmadze, Kobiashvili, Khmaladze, Kenia (Odikadze 88), A Iashvili, Dvalishvili. *Sent off: Khmaladze 56min.*

Oct 14 - Parma
Italy 3 (Gilardino 78, 81, 90)
Cyprus 2 (Makrides 12, C Michael 48)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,009. **Ref:** Yefet (Isr)
Italy: Marchetti - Santon, Gamberini, Cannavaro, Bocchetti, Pepe (Camoranesi 46), D'Agostino (De Rossi 66), Gattuso, Rossi (Di Natale 46), Gilardino, Quagliarella.
Cyprus: Avgousti - Christou (Satsias 30), Avraam, Charalambous, Dobrasinovic, Elia, C Michael, Makrides, Charalambides, Aloneftis (M Konstantinou 74), Okkas (Alexandrou 85).

Oct 14 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 0
Montenegro 0
Att: 50,212. **Ref:** Hrinak (Slk)
Rep Ireland: Given - McShane, Dunne, St Ledger, Kilbane, Rowlands (O'Shea 40), S Hunt (Keogh 88), Miller, Duff, N Hunt (Best 69), Keane.
Montenegro: Poleksic - Basa, Batak (Dzudovic 31), Novakovic, Jovanovic, Drincic, Pekovic, Boskovic (Kascelan 81), Zverotic, Delibasic (Damjanovic 69), Vukcevic.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 8 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy (Q)	10	7	3	0	18	7	24
Rep Ireland (P)	10	4	6	0	12	8	18
Bulgaria	10	3	5	2	17	13	14
Cyprus	10	2	3	5	14	16	9
Montenegro	10	1	6	3	9	14	9
Georgia	10	0	3	7	7	19	3

Group 9

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 9 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland (Q)	8	8	0	0	17	2	24
Norway	8	2	4	2	9	7	10
Scotland	8	3	1	4	6	11	10
Macedonia	8	2	1	5	5	11	7
Iceland	8	1	2	5	7	13	5

The best eight runners-up qualified for the Europe play-offs (*determined by points gained against teams finishing first, third, fourth and fifth in the respective groups)*

Europe play-offs

Winners qualify for the finals

Greece v Ukraine
Portugal v Bosnia-Herzegovina
Republic of Ireland v France
Russia v Slovenia
1st legs - 14.11.09; 2nd legs - 18.11.09

OCEANIA

(0.5 finals places)

2nd stage

WC QUALS: OCEANIA – 2ND STAGE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
New Zealand (P)	6	5	0	1	14	5	15
New Caledonia	6	2	2	2	12	10	8
Fiji	6	2	1	3	8	11	7
Vanuatu	6	1	1	4	5	13	4

New Zealand qualified to meet fifth-best Asian country Bahrain for a place in the finals (see Intercontinental Play-offs)

SOUTH AMERICA

(4.5 finals places)

Oct 10 - Buenos Aires
Argentina 2 (Higuain 48, Palermo 90)
Peru 1 (Rengifo 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 38,019. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)
Argentina: Romero - Gutierrez, Schiavi, Heinze, E Insua, Perez (Palermo 46), Mascherano, Di Maria, Aimar (F Insua 76), Messi, Higuain (Demichelis 67).
Peru: Butron - Prado, Zambrano, Vilchez, Rodriguez, R Torres, Ballon, Vargas, Solano (Palacios 65), Ramirez (La Rosa 90), Fano (Rengifo 71).

Oct 10 - Medellin
Colombia 2 (J Martinez 14, G Moreno 63)
Chile 4 (Ponce 34, Suazo 35, Valdivia 71, Orellana 78)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Rivera (Per)
Colombia: Ospina - Zuniga, Zapata, Yepes, Armero, Pabon (Rodallega 62), Guarin (Marrugo 56), Aguilar, Hernandez (G Moreno 56), J Martinez, Falcao Garcia.
Chile: Bravo - Medel, Ponce, Vidal, Carmona, Millar, Beausejour (I Fuentes 46), Orellana, Fernandez (Valdivia 31), M Gonzalez (Fierro 63), Suazo. *Sent off: Orellana 90min.*

Oct 10 - Quito
Ecuador 1 (Valencia 68)
Uruguay 2 (Suarez 69, Forlan pen 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 42,700. **Ref:** Fagundes (Bra)
Ecuador: Elizaga - Reasco, Hurtado, G Espinoza (Guagua 79), W Ayovi, Castillo, Noboa (Montero 58), Mendez, Valencia, Benitez, F Caicedo (Zura 66).
Uruguay: Muslera - Scotti, Lugano, Caceres, M Pereira, Perez (Eguren 73), Gargano, J Rodriguez (Fucile 59), A Pereira, Suarez (Cavani 85), Forlan.

Oct 10 - Puerto Ordaz
Venezuela 1 (J S Rondon 85)
Paraguay 2 (Cabanas 56, O Cardozo 80)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 41,680. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)
Venezuela: Vega - Boada, Lucena, Fuenmayor, Vizcarrondo, Rincon, Seijas (Rosales 68), C Gonzalez (J S Rondon 81), Arango, Fedor, Maldonado (Moreno 64).
Paraguay: Villar - Veron, Caniza, P Da Silva, Alcaraz, Ortigoza, Vera, Riveros, Martinez (Ledesma 57), Cabanas (O Cardozo 68), Haedo Valdez (E Benitez 73).

Oct 11 - La Paz
Bolivia 2 (Olivares 10, Martins 32)
Brazil 1 (Nilmar 70)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,557. **Ref:** Pozo (Chl)
Bolivia: Arias - Zabala, Raldes, Ronald Rivero, I Garcia, H Gutierrez, L Reyes, Olivares, A Reyes (J Vaca 74), Arce (Pachi 79), Martins (Pedriel 81).
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Luisao, Miranda, Andre Santos (Elano 67), Josue, Ramires, Daniel Alves, Diego Souza (Alex 46), Nilmar, Adriano (Diego Tardelli 46).

Oct 14 - Campo Grande
Brazil 0
Venezuela 0
Att: 30,000. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Luisao, Miranda, Filipe Luis (Alex 75), Gilberto Silva, Lucas, Ramires (Elano 77), Kaka, Nilmar, Luis Fabiano (Diego Tardelli 81). *Sent off: Miranda 56min.*
Venezuela: Vega - Chacon, Rey, Vizcarrondo, Granados, Di Giorgi, Lucena, Arango (Fedor 83), Rincon (Seijas 68), Moreno (A Rondon 74), Maldonado.

Oct 14 - Santiago
Chile 1 (Suazo 53)
Ecuador 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 47,000. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Chile: Bravo - Medel, Ponce, Vidal (Jara 67), Millar, Cereceda (I Fuentes 76), Beausejour (Paredes 31), Iturra, Sanchez, Valdivia, Suazo.
Ecuador: Elizaga - Reasco, Guagua, Hurtado, Hidalgo, Castillo, W Ayovi, Montero, Lara (Rojas 59), Mendez (Zura 76), Benitez. *Sent off: Castillo 84min.*

Oct 14 - Asuncion
Paraguay 0
Colombia 2 (Ramos 61, Rodallega 80)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,503. **Ref:** De Oliveira (Bra)
Paraguay: Villar - Veron, J C Caceres, Bonet, P Da Silva, Marecos (O Cardozo 65), Achucarro (Martinez 56), Riveros, Santana, Cabanas, Haedo Valdez (E Benitez 76).
Colombia: Ospina - I Cordoba, Anchico, Guarin, Marin, Zapata, Ramos (J Cordoba 80), Armero, J Martinez (Gutierrez 77), Aguilar, Falcao Garcia (Rodallega 54).

Oct 14 - Lima
Peru 1 (Fano 54)
Bolivia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,373. **Ref:** Soto (Ven)
Peru: Butron - Rodriguez, Zambrano, Vargas, Vilchez, Prado (Valverde 87), Ballon, Solano (Quinteros 69), Ramirez (Palacios 61), Rengifo, Fano. *Sent off: Fano 55min.*
Bolivia: Arias - Zabala, Ronald Rivero, L Reyes, Rodriguez, I Garcia, Rosauro Rivero, Gomez (Chavez 81), Olivares (Escobar 77), J Vaca (Pedriel 81), Martins. *Sent off: Rosauro Rivero 39min.*

Oct 14 - Montevideo
Uruguay 0
Argentina 1 (Bolatti 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Uruguay: Muslera - Lugano, Scotti, Caceres, A Pereira, Gargano (C Rodriguez 71), Perez, J Rodriguez (Cavani 59), M Pereira, Suarez (Abreu 77), Forlan. *Sent off: Caceres 83min, C Rodriguez 90min.*
Argentina: Romero - Otamendi, Schiavi, Demichelis, Heinze, Gutierrez, Mascherano, Di Maria (Monzon 75), Veron, Messi (Tevez 85), Higuain (Bolatti 79).

WC QUALS: SOUTH AMERICA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil (Q)	18	9	7	2	33	11	34
Chile (Q)	18	10	3	5	32	22	33
Paraguay (Q)	18	10	3	5	24	16	33
Argentina (Q)	18	8	4	6	23	20	28
Uruguay (P)	18	6	6	6	28	20	24
Ecuador	18	6	5	7	22	26	23
Colombia	18	6	5	7	14	18	23
Venezuela	18	6	4	8	23	29	22
Bolivia	18	4	3	11	22	36	15
Peru	18	3	4	11	11	34	13

Uruguay to play fourth-best CONCACAF country Costa Rica for a place in the finals (see Intercontinental Play-offs)

INTERCONTINENTAL PLAY-OFFS

Winners qualify for the finals

Asia/Oceania
1st leg

Oct 10 - Manama
Bahrain 0
New Zealand 0
Att: 37,000. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Bahrain: Jaffer - Aaish, M Hubail, Okwunwanne (A Hubail 86), Isa (Abdulrahman 79), Baba, Omar, Jalal, Mahfoodh, M Ahmed, H Ahmed (Latif 65).
New Zealand: Paston - Lochhead, Vicelich, Nelsen, Sigmund, Fallon (Wood 66), Elliott, Bertos, Brown (McGlinchey 68), Killen, Smeltz.

2nd leg - 14.11.09

CONCACAF/South America

Costa Rica v Uruguay
1st leg - 14.11.09; 2nd leg - 18.11.09

QUALIFIED FOR FINALS

(23 out of 32)
Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, England, Germany, Ghana, Holland, Honduras, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Mexico, North Korea, Paraguay, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa (as hosts), South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, United States

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

Group A

Oct 8 - Nihondaira
Japan 6 (Okazaki 18, 75, 78, Nagatomo 29, Nakazawa 51, Tulio Tanaka 67)
Hong Kong 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 16,028. **Ref:** Torky (Irn)
Japan: Nishikawa - Komano (Tokunaga 60), Tulio Tanaka, Nakazawa, Nagatomo, Endo, S Nakamura, Hasebe, Tamada (Matsui 75), Okubo (H Sato 75), Okazaki.
Hong Kong: Zhang Chunhui - Lee Chi-ho, Deng Jinghuang, Cordeiro, Sham Kwok-fai (Lee Wai-lun 53), Lo Kwan-yee, Lam Ka-wai (Lee Wai-lim 69), Lee Hong-lim, Bai He, Chan Siu-ki, Chao Pengfei (Gao Wen 46).

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	3	2	0	1	8	2	6
Bahrain	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Yemen	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Hong Kong	3	0	0	3	1	10	0

Dismissed...Caceres

URUGUAY

Duo see red in final qualifying game

Oscar Tabarez will be without Juventus defender Martin Caceres and Porto winger Cristian Rodriguez for the play-off against Costa Rica after both were sent off against Argentina.

Caceres will only miss the first leg through suspension, but Rodriguez – who saw red for hitting an opponent after the final whistle – was given a four-match ban.

Uruguay are in their third successive play-off, having beaten Australia to reach the 2002 finals and then losing to the same opponent four years later.

USA

Injured star out

Striker Charlie Davies will miss the World Cup finals after he had to endure several hours of emergency surgery following a car crash in which one person was killed.

The 23-year-old, who plays for Sochaux in France, suffered multiple facial injuries as well as bad breaks to his right leg and left elbow, and a lacerated bladder.

The crash occurred in Virginia and Davies was taken to hospital in Washington DC.

Surgery...Davies

Group B

Oct 14 - Melbourne
Australia 1 (Cahill 73)
Oman 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,595. **Ref:** Toma (Jap)
Australia: Schwarzer - Neill, Moore, Culina, Wilkshire, Valeri (Vidosic 74), Emerton, Chipperfield, Cahill (Jedinak 90), Kewell (Carney 79), Kennedy.
Oman: Al Habsi - Yousuf, Al Balushi, A Mubarak (Al Maimani 85), Rabee'a, Al Ajmi (Saleh 83), Al Hossani, Al Hosni, Hadid, Ayil, Basheer.

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Oman	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Kuwait	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Indonesia	2	0	2	0	0	0	2

Top two in each of the five groups qualify for finals

FRIENDLIES

Saturday, September 19

Sep 19 - Kimberley
South Africa 1 (Mphela 64)
Madagascar 0
HT: 0-0
South Africa: Baron - Gaxa, Khumalo, Gould, Thwala, Nkosi (Mphela 46), Mhlongo, Letsholonyane (Mahamutsa 87), Tshabalala (Klate 76), Khenyeza (Ngcobo 72), Henyekane (Schalkwyk 76).

Sunday, September 20

Sep 20 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 1 (S Isaac 10)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 1 (Cuffy 47)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Matthew (StK)
St Kitts & Nevis: Archibald - K Mitchum, Richards, Leader, Jones, Wigley, S Isaac, A Saddler, Tiran Hanley, Tishan Hanley, Clarke.
St Vincent & The Grenadines: McDowald - Morgan, Richardson, Stapleton, Hayde, Francis, Cuffy, Trimmingham, Stephens, Snagg, Charles (Sam 37).

Wednesday, September 30

Sep 30 - Cordoba
Argentina 2 (Palermo 29, 40)
Ghana 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Osses (Chl)
Argentina: Pozo - Canuto, Schiavi (Insaurralde 46), Caruzzo, Monzon, Perez (Mendez 46), Bolatti (Brana 67), Vangioni, F Insua (Gaitan 67), Palermo (Boselli 57), Hauche (L Rodriguez 57).
Ghana: McCarthy - Addey, Asong (Allotey 88), O Appiah, Yeboah, Boakye (M Otto 57), Owusu-Ansah, Cossie (Annan 46), Boateng (Oppong 73), J Otto (Alhassan 46), Owusu (Opoku 46).

Sep 30 - Hohhot
China 4 (Gao Lin 29, Qu Bo 52, Zhao Peng 54, Yu Hai 58)
Botswana 1 (Mokgathi 68)
HT: 1-0
China: Yang Zhi - Zhao Peng (Wang Qiang; Cheng Liang), Zhao Xuri (Cui Peng), Jiang Ning, Qu Bo (Yang Xu), Liu Jianye, Rong Hao, Gao Lin (Deng Zhuoxiang), Yang Hao (Huang Bowen), Yu Hai, Du Wei.

Sep 30 - Dallas, USA
Mexico 1 (Aguilar 88)
Colombia 2 (G Moreno 44, Quintero 79)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Salazar (USA)
Mexico: Corona - Aguilar, Ayala, Rojas, Duenas, Torrado (J A Castro 46), Dos Santos (Araujo 69), Luna, Pacheco (Esqueda 63), Calderon (Hernandez 56), Cacho (Arellano 56).
Colombia: Julio - Anchico, Mendoza, Henriquez, Nunez, Marin (Escobar 74), D Cordoba, Marrugo (Viafara 67), Pabon (Quintero 78), G Moreno (Hernandez 48; Gonzalez 90), J Martinez (Gutierrez 64).

Friday, October 2

Oct 2 - Cairo
Egypt 4 (Aboutraika 7, 83, A Hassan pen 17, A Zaki pen 90)
Mauritius 0
HT: 2-0
Egypt: El Hadary (Seoud) - Fathi (A Said), Fadhil, H Said, Salem (Gomaa), Moawwad (Kamal), A Hassan (Abdelmalek), Hommos (Shaaban), Aboutraika, Zaki, Amin (El Gabbas).

Monday, October 5

Oct 5 - Cairo
Libya 1 (Kerwaa 88)
Kuwait 1 (Jarragh pen 56)
HT: 0-0

Thursday, October 8

Oct 8 - Rijeka
Croatia 3 (Corluka 7, Klasnic 11, Jelavic 90)
Qatar 2 (Siddiq 43, Quintana 69)
HT: 2-1
Croatia: Runje - Corluka (Cale 66), Krizanac, Kovac, Pranjic (Lovren 46), Srna, Vukojevic (J Leko 90), Kranjcar, Pokrivac (Rakitic 46), Olic (Mandzukic 46), Klasnic (Jelavic 64).
Qatar: Burhan - Rajab, Yaser (Abdulraab 46), Siddiq, Majid, Al Hamad (Lamy 78), Al Zakeba, Al Bloshi, Afeef (Faris 71), Al Haidous (Ahmed 85), Quintana.

Saturday, October 10

Oct 10 - Vila Real, Portugal
Angola 2 (Djalma Campos 37, Andre Makanga 64)
Malta 1 (Cohen 13)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Nuno Almeida (Por)
Angola: Lama - Mabina (Hernani 46), Joel, Enoque, Kali, Gilberto, Dede (Kivuvu 81), Stelvio (Andre Makanga 46), Djalma Campos (Mateus 64), Johson (Job 73), Ze Kalanga (Mantorras 46).
Malta: Hogg - Manny Muscat, Said (Scicluna 24), Caruana, Failla, Hutchinson (Fenech 56), Pace (G Agius 56), Briffa (Sammut 64), S Bajada (Azzopardi 70), Cohen (Mallia 70), M Mifsud.

Oct 10 - Sydney
Australia 0
Holland 0
Att: 40,537. **Ref:** Minoru (Jap)
Australia: Schwarzer - Wilkshire, Moore (Kisnorbo 46), Neill, Carney, Holman, Culina, Grella (Valeri 16; Jedinak 71), Kewell, Cahill (Emerton 46), Kennedy (Vidosic 46).
Holland: Stekelenburg - Boulahrouz, Heitinga, Mathijsen, Van Bronckhorst (Braafheid 77), Kuijt (Babel 46), De Zeeuw (Mendes da Silva 84), Schaars (Van der Vaart 65), Sneijder (Engelaar 70), Elia, Huntelaar.

Oct 10 - Yokohama
Japan 2 (Berra og 83, Honda 90)
Scotland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 61,285. **Ref:** Kim (SKo)
Japan: Kawashima - Abe, Iwamasa, Konno, Uchida (Tokunaga 65), Hashimoto (Okubo 65), Inamoto (Komano 81), K Nakamura, Ishikawa (Matsui 65), Honda, Maeda (Morimoto 56).
Scotland: Gordon - Berra, G Caldwell, McManus, Whittaker, L Wallace, Adam (Hughes 67), Dorrans, R Wallace (Cowie 46), Conway (Riordan 74), L Miller (S Fletcher 46).

Oct 10 - Cairo
Jordan 1 (Deeb 64)
Kuwait 2 (Jarragh 55, Nasser 70)
HT: 0-0

Oct 10 - Oslo
Norway 1 (Waehler 48)
South Africa 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,504. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Norway: Knudsen - Hogli, Reginiussen (Hoiland 59), Waehler, J A Riise, B H Riise (Brenne 70), Hauger (Haestad 83), Grindheim, Gamst Pedersen (Rindaroy 46), Carew (Braaten 71), Huseklepp (Moldskred 78).
South Africa: Josephs - Gaxa, A Mokoena, Gould, Masilela, Dikgacoi, Sibaya (Henyekane 80), Modise, Parker (Cale 72), Tshabalala (Khenyeza 60), Mphela.

Oct 10 - Dubai
United Arab Emirates 1 (Alkas 47)
Palestine 1 (Al Amour 35)
HT: 0-1

Sunday, October 11

Oct 11 - Skopje
Macedonia 2 (Pandev 25, 40)
Qatar 1 (Haroon 24)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Georgiev (Bul)
Macedonia: Pacovski (Nuredinoski 85) - Noveski (Sedloski 46), I Mitreski (Mojsov 74), Popov, Ibraimi, Sumulikoski, Despotovski, Lazarevski (Popov 46), Naumoski (Ivanovski 46), Stojkov (Alimi 46), Pandev (Savic 71).
Qatar: Burhan - Al Ghanim, Mubarak, Lamy, Omar (Nabil 67), Al Yazeedi (Al Haidous 46), Faris, Haroon, Afeef (Yasser 46), Ahmed Ali (Quintana 81), Taher.

Tuesday, October 13

Oct 13 - Le Mans, France
Congo 0
North Korea 0

Oct 13 - Reykjavik
Iceland 1 (V Gunnarsson 50)
South Africa 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,253. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Iceland: Arason - R Sigurdsson, I Sigurdsson, Steinsson, R Gislason, K O Sigurdsson (Solvi Jonsson 46), A E Gunnarsson, Hallfredsson, B Gunnarsson (Skulason 82), V Gunnarsson (Bjornsson 86), Johannsson (Palmason 65).
South Africa: Josephs - Gaxa (Nthethe 73), Sangweni, A Mokoena, Thwala, Modise (Tshabalala 81), Sibaya (Mhlongo 73), Dikgacoi, Cale (Van Heerden 61), Henyekane (Khenyeza 61), Ngcobo (Mphela 72).

Wednesday, October 14

Oct 14 - Olhao, Portugal
Angola 0
Cameroon 0

Oct 14 - Miyagi
Japan 5 (Okazaki 5, 8, 65, Morimoto 11, Honda 85)
Togo 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 32,852. **Ref:** Mikulski (Pol)
Japan: Kawashima - Nakazawa, Tulio Tanaka, Tokunaga (Uchida 46), Nagatomo, S Nakamura (Ishikawa 82), Endo (Honda 46), K Nakamura (Konno 69), Hasebe, Okazaki (H Sato 78), Morimoto (Okubo 46).
Togo: Obilale - Mango, Akakpo, Akinsola, Toure (Tokple 78), Tawali, Mani, Brenner, Ahodikpe (Wome 69), Kpatoumbi, Gakpe.

Oct 14 - Saint-Gratien, France
Qatar 2 (Afeef 60, M Hassan 75)
DR Congo 2 (Mbayo 35, pen 72)
HT: 0-1

Oct 14 - Seoul
South Korea 2 (Ki Sung-yueng 42, Oh Beom-seok 80)
Senegal 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 31,574. **Ref:** Tan (Chn)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Cha Du-ri (Oh Beom-seok 78), Cho Yong-hyung, Lee Jung-soo, Lee Young-pyo, Lee Chung-yong (Ko Yo-han 82), Ki Sung-yueng (Kim Nam-il 46), Kim Jung-woo (Cho Won-hee 46), Park Ji-sung, Lee Geun-ho (Seol Ki-hyeon 46), Park Chu-young (Yeom Ki-hun 75).
Senegal: C Ndiaye - Faty, M Sarr, Diakhate, Thioune, Dia, Diallo, Tavarez (Mohamed 70), P D Cisse (M B Diouf 58), Ba (Diarra 79), Sow (N Ndiaye 64).

Oct 14 - Rades
Tunisia 0
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al Shamrani 2)
HT: 0-1
Tunisia: Kasraoui - Chahed (Souissi), Felhi, Jemal, Abdennour, Mrabet, Saihi (Korbi), Belaid (Taider), Ben Khalfallah (Zitouni), Dhaouadi (Ben Saada), Nouioui (Jemaa).

Oct 14 - Dubai
United Arab Emirates 3 (Al Shehhi 35, Khamis 56, Suroor pen 80)
Jordan 1 (Deeb pen 60)
HT: 1-0

Tuesday, October 20

**Oct 20 - Ho Chi Minh City*
Vietnam 1 (Nguyen Quang Hai 58)
Turkmenistan 0
HT: 0-0

Thursday, October 22

**Oct 22 - Ho Chi Minh City*
Singapore 4 (Duric 9, 38, Masturi 60, Amri 77)
Turkmenistan 2 (Shamuradov pen 14, Ovekov 84)
HT: 2-1

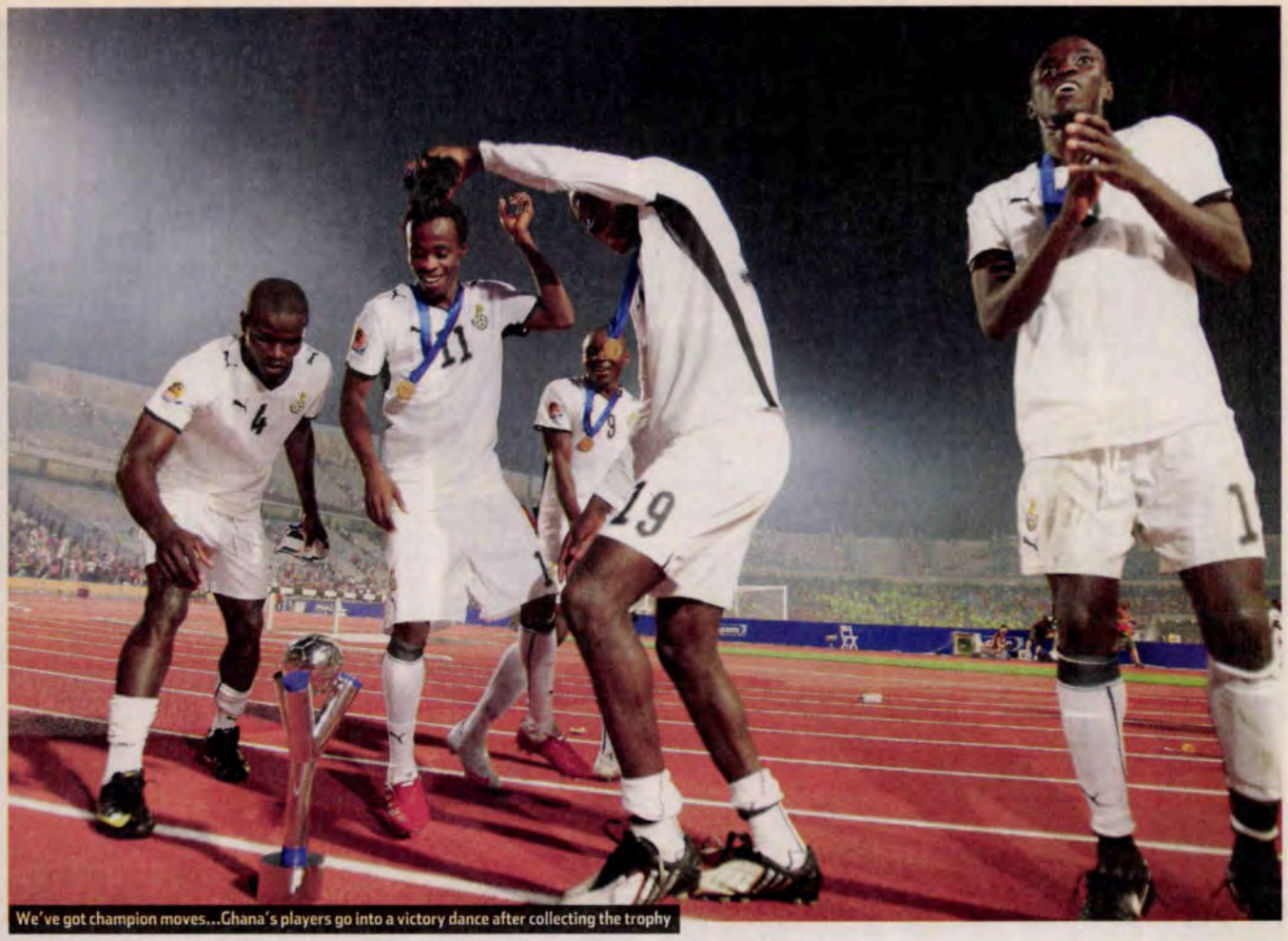
Saturday, October 24

**Oct 24 - Ho Chi Minh City*
Vietnam 2 (Nguyen Quang Hai 18, Vu Nhu Thanh pen 85)
Singapore 2 (Duric 26, Nawaz 51)
HT: 1-1

**Part of Ho Chi Minh City tournament, which also featured a university (i.e. non-A international) side*

Monday, October 26

Oct 26 - Al Jahra
Kuwait 1 (Al Shaikh 90)
Syria 0
HT: 0-0



We've got champion moves...Ghana's players go into a victory dance after collecting the trophy

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP

Ghana triumph lifts African game

AFRICAN FOOTBALL received a considerable boost ahead of next year's World Cup when Ghana beat Brazil on penalties to win the Under-20 version in Cairo.

It was Ghana's first triumph at this level, having finished runners-up in 2001 and 1993. They also became the first African team to win the world Under-20 crown.

The Black Satellites, captained by Andre Ayew of Marseille and featuring the tournament's outstanding player in Dominic Adiyiah, played some outstanding attacking football during the tournament. However, in the Final against Brazil, they were forced on to the back foot early on after defender Daniel Addo was sent off for bringing down the goal-bound Alex Teixeira.

The sending-off after 37 minutes changed the whole complexion of the game, though Ghana had struggled early on. Strikers Adiyiah and Ransford Osei, the tournament's most prolific partnership, failed to muster a shot on goal in the first half.

A goalless 90 minutes turned into a goalless 120 and a penalty shoot-out.

Ghana's Jonathan Mensah was the first player to miss, but he was followed by Souza and Bright Addae, who also failed to score. That left Maicon with the chance to win the title for Brazil, but he blasted the chance high over the bar and Adiyiah tucked away his penalty to take the shoot-out into sudden death. Ghana keeper Daniel Agyei denied Alex Teixeira, leaving Emmanuel Agyemang-Badu the chance to win it for Ghana, which he duly did.

"We fought like dogs to win, but we're world champions and all the tiredness goes away when you climb those steps to collect the gold medal," said Ayew, son of Abedi Pele, Ghana's greatest player.

Ghana had gone behind in their opening Group D match before recovering to beat Uzbekistan 2-1. They then demonstrated their tournament credentials with a 4-0 thrashing of a poor England side who were without a number of well-known Premier League players.

Ghana held off a fightback from Uruguay to draw their final game 2-2 and top the group ahead of the South Americans. England, who had lost 1-0 to Uruguay thanks to a spectacular stunning scissors kick from substitute Tabare Viudez – finished bottom of the group after drawing their final game 1-1 with Uzbekistan. Alex Tchuimeni-Nimely, the Liberian-born striker on the books of Manchester City, scored England's first goal in the competition since 1997.

In Group A, hosts Egypt benefited from the support of the home crowd at Cairo's International stadium. With a squad composed entirely of home-based players, they won their opener in comprehensive style, 4-1, against Trinidad & Tobago. They then conceded a last-minute winner to 10-man Paraguay to lose their second game 2-1 before beating Italy 4-2 in a thrilling final match, with substitute Bogy, of Zamalek, scoring two second-half goals. Italy, despite also being held to a goalless stalemate by Paraguay, squeezed through as one of the best third-placed teams.

Spain cruised through Group B, with Arsenal midfielder Fran Merida

'We fought like dogs to win it but all the tiredness goes away when you climb those steps to collect the gold medal'

Ghana captain Andre Ayew

Spot on...Emmanuel Agyemang-Badu beats Brazil keeper Rafael with the penalty that gave Ghana the World Under-20 title

scoring both goals in a 2-0 defeat of Nigeria, while Getafe striker Dani Parejo was on target with a free-kick in the 3-0 victory over Venezuela. The South Americans finished runners-up in the group after winning their opening game 1-0 over Nigeria.

Tahiti set new standards for tournament whipping boys, conceding 21 goals and scoring none.

European champions Germany began their campaign in impressive style with a 3-0 victory over USA in Group C. The Germans were then held by South Korea but secured a comfortable win over Cameroon in their final group encounter.

The Americans beat Cameroon in their second game but had to endure ultimate disappointment after they lost their final game to South Korea.

In Group E, Brazil confirmed their status as pre-tournament favourites by opening with a 5-0 win over Costa Rica with goalscorers Alex Teixeira, Giuliano and Alan Kardec emerging as potential stars of the tournament.

The Czech Republic also won their opener in the group, 2-1 over Australia, and then held Brazil to a goalless stalemate in their second game before beating Costa Rica 3-2 – with two goals from Mlada Boleslav striker Jan Chramosta – in their final group game to take the runners-up spot behind Brazil.

Eight changes

Brazil coach Rogerio Lourenco made eight changes to his starting line-up for the final group game against Australia, who took a shock early lead before going down 3-1.

Hungary lost their opening Group F match, 3-0 to Honduras, but responded with a 4-0 drubbing of South Africa and a 2-0 defeat of UAE to go through to the knockout stages as group winners.

In a number of intriguing second round matches, Brazil faced an all-South American showdown with Uruguay. Three Brazilian goals in a devastating nine-minute spell in the first half put paid to Uruguayan ambitions, though they rallied briefly when Jonathan Urretaviscaya of Benfica pulled a goal back.

Ghana needed extra time to overcome South Africa in their second round match. Adiyiah's wonderful strike settled an attacking match in which South Africa had taken the lead through Kermit Erasmus before Ayew equalised midway through the second half.

Spain's impressive-looking challenge came to an abrupt halt against Italy, who ran out 3-1 winners after taking advantage of an extra man following Alberto Botia's red card in the 28th minute for a two-footed lunge on Mattia Mustacchio, who went on to score twice as Italy took control in the second half, with Andrea Mazzarani emerging as a key figure.

Bjorn Kopplin scored a dramatic winner for Germany in the final minute of added time against Nigeria. The European champions twice came from behind to equalise in a match that exploded into life in the second half in Suez with five goals and a red card for Tobias Kempe.

Costa Rica, who had squeezed into the knockout stages in third place in Group E, shocked the hosts Egypt with a 2-0 victory in front of an expectant crowd at Cairo's International stadium.

Goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi was Hungary's hero in their second round games, saving three Czech Republic penalties in the shoot-out after his side had twice equalised. In the other games in the first knockout round, there was disappointment for South America as Paraguay went down 3-0 to South Korea, while Venezuela lost 2-1 to UAE despite taking an early lead.

In the quarter-finals, Ghana's 3-2 defeat of South Korea was the only match that did not go into extra time. Two more goals from Adiyiah, as well as another from Osei, proved just enough to see off the Koreans, who battled hard and twice reduced the

Brazil looked to be heading out of the competition against Germany until Maicon popped up two minutes from time

deficit as Ghana held on for a place in the semis.

Brazil needed two goals from substitute Maicon to overcome Germany, who had taken the lead through a header from Schalke's Lewis Holtby. The Brazilians looked to be heading out of the competition until Maicon popped up two minutes from time to meet Alex Teixeira's pass for the equaliser. Then, within seconds of the start of extra time, Fluminense forward Maicon was the first to react to a long punt forward and hit the winner.

Four red cards

A humdinger of a match in Suez between Hungary and Italy saw four red cards and five goals before Hungary triumphed 3-2 after extra time. Hungary captain Vladimir Koman had scored after just two minutes from the penalty spot after Matteo Gentili tripped Krisztian Nemeth, the Liverpool striker on loan at AEK Athens.

Despite Gentili then being sent off for another foul on Nemeth, Italy revived and equalised late on through attacking left-back Antonio Mazzotta. Italy were reduced to nine men two minutes later when Francesco Bini was given a straight red card for kicking out at Koman. Shortly afterwards Hungary's Adrian Szekeres was dismissed for an elbow by Colombian referee Oscar Ruiz, who also sent both coaches to the stands as Hungary tried to press home their advantage in extra time.

Nemeth scored in the second half of injury time only for Giacomo Bonaventura to equalise a minute later. There was still time for Michelangelo Albertazzi to be sent off and for Nemeth to grab a second – Hungary's third and decisive goal.

Costa Rica proved to be the surprise package of the quarter-finals, beating UAE 2-1 after Marcos Urena pounced in the last seconds of extra time to send them into the semis.

But their luck ran out in the semi-finals as Brazil ground out a 1-0 win through Alan Kardec's second-half volley from Alex Teixeira's flick. Meanwhile, Ghana booked their place in the final with a 3-2 win over Hungary. Abeiku Quansah's thunderous strike proved the difference after Hungary's second-half revival had cancelled out Adiyiah's two first-half goals. ●

John Holmesdale

Keep ball...Wellington Junior fends of Ghana's Ghandy Kassenu and Mohammed Rabiu

RESULTS

GROUP A

Sep 24: Egypt 4 Trinidad & Tobago 1
Sep 25: Paraguay 0 Italy 0
Sep 28: Italy 2 Trinidad & Tobago 1
Sep 28: Egypt 1 Paraguay 2
Oct 1: Trinidad & Tobago 0 Paraguay 0
Oct 1 : Italy 2 Egypt 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt	3	2	0	1	9	5	6
Paraguay	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Italy	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Trin & Tob	3	0	1	2	2	6	1

GROUP B

Sep 25: Nigeria 0 Venezuela 1
Sep 25: Spain 8 Tahiti 0
Sep 28: Nigeria 0 Spain 2
Sep 28: Tahiti 0 Venezuela 8
Oct 1: Venezuela 0 Spain 3
Oct 1: Tahiti 0 Nigeria 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	3	3	0	0	13	0	9
Venezuela	3	2	0	1	9	3	6
Nigeria	3	1	0	2	5	3	3
Tahiti	3	0	0	3	0	21	0

GROUP C

Sep 26: USA 0 Germany 3
Sep 26: Cameroon 2 South Korea 0
Sep 29: South Korea 1 Germany 1
Sep 29: USA 4 Cameroon 1
Oct 2: Germany 3 Cameroon 0
Oct 2: South Korea 3 USA 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	3	2	1	0	7	1	7
South Korea	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
USA	3	1	0	2	4	7	3
Cameroon	3	1	0	2	3	7	3

GROUP D

Sep 26: Ghana 2 Uzbekistan 1
Sep 26: England 0 Uruguay 1
Sep 29: Uruguay 3 Uzbekistan 0
Sep 29: Ghana 4 England 0
Oct 2: Uruguay 2 Ghana 2
Oct 2: Uzbekistan 1 England 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	3	2	1	0	8	3	7
Uruguay	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Uzbekistan	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
England	3	0	1	2	1	6	1

GROUP E

Sep 27: Brazil 5 Costa Rica 0
Sep 27: Czech Republic 2 Australia 1
Sep 30: Australia 0 Costa Rica 3
Sep 30: Brazil 0 Czech Republic 0
Oct 3: Costa Rica 2 Czech Republic 3
Oct 3: Australia 1 Brazil 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	3	2	1	0	8	1	7
Czech Rep	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Costa Rica	3	1	0	2	5	8	3
Australia	3	0	0	3	2	8	0

GROUP F

Sep 27: UAE 2 South Africa 2
Sep 27: Honduras 3 Hungary 0
Sep 30: Hungary 4 South Africa 0
Sep 30: UAE 1 Honduras 0
Oct 3: Hungary 2 UAE 0
Oct 3: South Africa 2 Honduras 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hungary	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
UAE	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
South Africa	3	1	1	1	4	6	4
Honduras	3	1	0	2	3	3	3

2ND ROUND

Oct 5: Spain 1 Italy 3;
Paraguay 0 South Korea 3;
Ghana 2 South Africa 1 (aet);
Egypt 0 Costa Rica 2;
Hungary 2 Czech Rep 2 (aet, Hungary 4-3 on pens)
Oct 7: Brazil 3 Uruguay 1;
Venezuela 1 UAE 2;
Germany 3 Nigeria 2

QUARTER-FINALS

Oct 9 - Suez
S Korea 2 (Park Hee-seong 31, Kim Dong-sub 82)
Ghana 3 (Adiyiah 8, 78, Osei 28)
HT: 1-2. Att: 31,000. Ref: Aguilar (Slv)
S Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Kim Min-woo, Kim Young-gwon, Hong Jeong-ho, Koo Ja-cheol, Cho Young-cheol (Lee Seung-yeoul 74), Seo Jung-jin, Jeong Dong-ho, Moon Ki-han (Seo Yong-duk 80), Yun Suk-young, Park Hee-seong (Kim Dong-sub 67).
Ghana: Agyei - Inkoom, Mensah, Addo, Addy (Kassenu 50), Agyemang-Badu, Ayew, Rabiu (Addae 86), Opare (Benson 75), Osei, Adiyiah.

Oct 9 - Suez
Italy 2 (Mazzotta 82, Bonaventura 113)
Hungary 3 (Koman pen 2, Nemeth 112, 117) aet
HT: 0-1. 90 mins: 1-1. Att: 31,000. Ref: Ruiz (COL)
Italy: Fiorillo - Mazzotta, Gentili, Albertazzi, Calderoni, Della Penna (Bonaventura 58), Mazzarani, Misuraca (Eusepi 46), Bini, Mustacchio, Raggio Garibaldi (Romizi 66). *Sent off: Gentili 71min, Bini 84 min, Albertazzi 115.*
Hungary: Gulacsi - Szabo, Kiss (Futacs 87), Debreceni, Korcsmar (Takacs 79), Koman, Andras Simon (Dudas 59), Nemeth, Szekeres, Zambo, Gosztonyi. *Sent off: Sekeres 90min.*

Oct 10 - Cairo
Brazil 2 (Maicon 88, 91)
Germany 1 (Holtby 73) aet
HT: 0-0. 90 mins: 1-1. Att:32,935. Ref: Rosetti (Ita)
Brazil: Rafael - Douglas (Wellington Junior 46), Dalton, Renan, Diogo, Alex Teixeira, Alan Kardec, Giuliano, Paulo Henrique (Douglas Costa 67), Fabricio, Boquita (Maicon 77).
Germany: Zieler - Jung, Jungwirth, L Bender, S Bender (Schaffler 100), Vrancic, Sukuta-Pasu, Holtby (Schahin 100), Kopplin, Aydilek (Kaptan 85), Funk.

Oct 10 - Cairo
UAE 1 (Ahmed Ali 33)
Costa Rica 2 (Martinez 37, Urena 120) aet
HT: 1-1. 90 mins: 1-1. Att: 32,935. Ref: Bebek (Cro)
UAE: Y Abdulrahman - Saeed, A Abdulrahman, Al Kamil, Ali (Mabkhoot 67), Khalil, Fardan (Marzooq 79), Fawzi, Ahmed, Hussain, Al Menhali (Jassim 99). *Sent off: Fawzi 119.*
Costa Rica: Alvarado - Mena, Smith, Urena, Guzman, Estrada (Blanco 105), Madrigal (Guevara 57), Gamboa, Oviedo, Hernandez (Varela 62), Martinez.

SEMI-FINALS

Oct 13 - Cairo
Ghana 3 (Adiyiah 10, 31, Quansah 81)
Hungary 2 (Futacs 73, Balajti 84)
HT: 2-0. Att: 39,812. Ref: Larrionda (Uru)
Ghana: Agyei - Inkoom, Addo, Addy, Quansah (Awako 90), Agyemang-Badu, Ayew (Agyemang 75), Rabiu, Osei, Addae, Adiyiah.
Hungary: Gulacsi - Szabo, Kiss, Debreceni, Korcsmar (Futacs 71), Andras Simon, Nemeth (Varga 46), Presinger (Balajti 46), Zambo, Adam Simon, Gosztonyi.

Oct 13 - Cairo
Brazil 1 (Alan Kardec 67)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 0-0. Att: 39,812. Ref: Undiano (Spa)
Brazil: Rafael - Dalton, Rafael Toloi, Diogo (Bertucci 49), Alex Teixeira (Boquita 83), Maylson (Renan 46), Alan Kardec, Giuliano, Paulo Henrique, Wellington Junior, Souza.
Costa Rica: Alvaro - Mena, Smith, Blanco, Urena, Guzman, Estrada (Guevara 72), Madrigal (Hernandez 80), Leal, Martinez (Castro 84), Varela.

3RD PLACE

Oct 16 - Cairo
Hungary 1 (Koman pen 90)
Costa Rica 1 (Urena 81) aet
Hungary 2-0 on pens

FINAL

Oct 16 - Cairo
Ghana 0
Brazil 0 aet
Ghana 4-3 on pens
Att: 67,814. Ref: De Bleeckere (Bel)
Ghana: Agyei - Inkoom, Mensah, Addo, Addy, Quansah (Agyemang 107), Agyemang-Badu, Ayew, Rabiu (Addae 101), Osei (Kassenu 65), Adiyiah.
Sent off: Addo 37min.
Brazil: Rafael - Douglas (Wellington Junior 41), Dalton, Rafael Toloi, Renan (Maicon 75), Diogo, Alex Teixeira, Alan Kardec, Giuliano, Paulo Henrique (Douglas Costa 64), Souza.

FINLAND HJK claim first title since 2003

Champion feeling...HJK get ready to celebrate as captain Tuomas Haapala hoists trophy

THERE WERE A FEW hiccups and dramas along the way, but in the end HJK Helsinki did what was expected of them and brought the title to Finland's capital for the first time since 2003.

The biggest question mark over HJK's march to victory was their coach, Antti Muurinen, who was under intense pressure from fans and the media after his refusal to give more playing time to youngsters from the club's academy, which is widely regarded as the best youth-development programme in Finland.

This contrasted with Mika Lehkosuo's Honka, who successfully integrated 18-year-old Rasmus Schuller into their side and retained a reputation as one of the most progressive and youth-orientated clubs in the country. Honka started the season badly, but improved over the year and pipped TPS to second spot on the final day of the season.

Muurinen's cautious outlook, defensive tactics, reluctance to blood young players, and even his inability to swear properly, came under attack, but the mustachioed former national team manager had the last laugh when his side clinched the title by securing the single point they needed at home to FF Jaro on the last day of the season.

After losing the first Turku derby to Inter Turku in May, TPS went on a 16-game unbeaten run which was largely inspired by Wayne Brown, the midfielder signed on loan from Fulham, and Kasper Hamalainen, who was converted from skilful winger to solid defensive midfielder and is now expected to move abroad after breaking into the national team, where he plays in his original position.

Early title contenders Haka fell back into the pack after internal squabbling took its toll. Owner Seppo Koskinen took a bigger and bigger role as the season wore on, and he finally fired Haka's coach Olli Huttunen in early September, after much sniping and sabre-rattling in the press, and rumours of player movements undertaken against Huttunen's wishes.

At the end of the season Koskinen also fired the club's board and announced he would take an even more active role in player recruitment and all other aspects of the club's operations. The nightclub magnate's impatience might yet see further upheaval at Haka as the club, historically one of Finland's most successful, restructures its budget and tries to cope with the de-industrialisation affecting Valkeakoski, the small town in which it is based.

VEIKKAUSLIIGA - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HJK Helsinki	26	14	10	2	45	21	52
Honka	26	13	10	3	65	29	49
TPS	26	13	10	3	46	20	49
Mariehamn	26	10	13	3	30	21	43
Inter Turku	26	11	7	8	38	30	40
Haka	26	10	7	9	40	35	37
Tampere	26	11	4	11	31	31	37
VPS	26	10	5	11	30	36	35
MyPa	26	9	7	10	32	30	34
Jaro	26	8	8	10	33	34	32
Lahti	26	8	7	11	33	40	31
KuPS	26	6	5	15	29	53	23
JJK	26	3	7	16	25	52	16
RoPS	26	4	4	18	21	66	16

Finnish clubs failed to take advantage of UEFA's reorganisation of the European club competitions. HJK were beaten by Vetra, Honka lost to Qarabakh and a Jari Litmanen-inspired Lahti put in a feisty performance but still went out at the hands of Brugge, all three exits in the third qualifying round of the Europa League.

Inter Turku's first European campaign ended in disappointment when they exited the Champions League in the second qualifying round, losing to Sheriff Tiraspol.

At the bottom of the table, RoPS were relegated automatically, while JJK won their play-off against Kokkola side KPV. RoPS thought they might be reprieved after they were awarded three points from a game they lost 3-0 against KuPS when the Finnish FA found that KuPS had played Nigerian striker Dickson Nwakaeme before he was eligible. Nwakaeme had played a league match in Senegal during May and should therefore have waited until August for his debut.

KuPS appealed and somehow won their points back to finish safe from relegation, third from bottom. It was a difficult decision to understand, but Laplanders RoPS have few friends or advocates after their difficulties with the league's ground requirements and their policy of bringing in a large number of cheap, mediocre foreigners to fill their squad.

Inter Turku will compete in Europe for only the second time after beating Tampere United 2-1 in a tense Cup Final. Tampere took the lead through Jonne Hjelm, but Kennedy Nwanganga equalised just before half time and sustained Inter pressure eventually told when Timo Furuholm scored the winner with 15 minutes left.

Egan Richardson

PLAYER OF THE SEASON/NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
WAYNE BROWN (TPS)
After arriving in a blaze of publicity on the eve of the season, he lived up to expectations, with nine goals and eight assists over the season. He returned to Fulham after his initial loan spell ended in September but after pleas from TPS chief executive Marco Casagrande and extrovert manager Pasi Rautiainen, Fulham boss Roy Hodgson allowed him to return to help TPS challenge for the title. That wasn't to be, but he showed a flair and tenacity that is rarely combined.

COACH OF THE YEAR
ANTTI MUURINEN (HJK)
No surprise after his title triumph, which was a cathartic event for the 55-year-old. After collecting the title trophy he told the media about getting used to "the new way of thinking in the 21st century", something he had experienced via the lambasting he received from all sides during the season. His contract was renewed and he will get at least one more season at the club he took to the group stages of the Champions League in 1998-99.

Inspirational...Wayne Brown

NORWAY Rosenborg back on top

AFTER TWO disappointing seasons in which they dropped to fifth place, Rosenborg came back with a bang and won the 2009 championship.

Swedish coach Erik Hamren was given sufficient time to model his team along the same principles that brought him earlier success with AaB Aalborg in Denmark. Under his guidance Rosenborg may have been criticised for not playing the most adventurous football but they were in the driving seat from start to finish, losing only one of their 30 league matches.

By winning the title, the Trondheim club reminded people why they were such a force in domestic and European club football a few years back.

There are a number of factors behind Rosenborg's success. The club's leading goalscorer Rade Prica, who bagged 17 in the league, is certainly one of them. Hamren knew what he would get when he bought the Swede from Sunderland, where he had nearly drifted into oblivion, because he had had him under his wing before.

Prica, who lined up superbly with Steffen Iversen, scored goals from all angles but will be best remembered for his long-range thunderbolts. In the final match of the campaign, in Bergen, his equaliser denied Brann the chance to finish fourth.

Versatile Vadim Demidov also blossomed this season, forming a strong partnership with Dane Kris Stadsgaard in central defence, with Swedish full-backs Mikael Lustig and Mikael Dorsin completed a strong back line.

Midfielder Roar Strand, who will be 40 in February, completed his 20th season with the club. The veteran won his 25th league title with Rosenborg this season and has played more than 400 league matches.

As the season came to a close, Hamren was targeted by the Swedish FA to take over the national side and they finally got his signature. He will continue as joint Rosenborg coach and Sweden national coach until September next year.

Molde finished runners-up under another Swedish coach, Kjell Jonevret, in their second season in the top flight. Their prolific front line scored 62 goals with Ivorians Mame Biram Diouf and Pape Pate Diouf grabbing 16 and 11 respectively. Manchester United signed Mame Diouf earlier this year but let him finish the season in Norway.

Veterans Magne Hoset and Daniel Berg Hestad contributed strongly and left-back Knut Indaroy won his first international call-up. His attacking down the flank has been a revelation.

Stabaek struggled initially but came back strongly towards the end, challenging Molde for second place. Daniel Nannskog scored 15 goals, only one less than in the championship season of 2008, but the team lacked the consistency of last year. Janne Jonsson has brought many Swedish countrymen to the club and Pontus Farnerud has been influential with his movement, accurate passing and ability to steer the play.

Newcomers Odd Grenland impressed through most of the season but dipped towards the end and had to settle for fourth place. Coach Dag-Eilev Fagermo has formed a well-balanced side with youngsters and experienced players.

Striker Peter Kovacs scored 16 goals and Morten Fevang was a revelation in his new position in central defence. Youngsters Fredrik Gulsvik and Magnus Lekven have been groomed to take over responsibility next year.

Brann (fifth), Tromso (sixth), Valerenga (seventh) and especially Viking (10th) did not manage to satisfy their own aspirations to the season.

To the surprise of most observers, this season's newcomers – Odd Grenland, Sandefjord and Start – all survived in their first season at top flight. Bodo/Glimt and Lyn struggled all season and were relegated.

Fredrikstad were sensationally relegated after they lost to Sarpsborg in the play-off semi-finals. The Aristocrats, who only moved to a new stadium two years ago, lost 2-0 to the second division's fifth-placed club.

The promoted clubs are Haugesund and Honefoss, the latter looking back on a decade in which they have climbed from the lower divisions to the top flight. Captain Frode Lafton and striker Lars Lafton were influential this season.

Aalesund, coached by former international Kjetil Rekdal, upset the form book when they beat Molde on penalties after a dramatic Cup Final ended 2-2. It was the club's first trophy.

Sigurd Odegaard

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
ERIK HUSEKLEPP (Brann)
Made the breakthrough for Brann, scoring 15 goals. Some of them were spectacular, as the 25-year-old showed an unerring touch to chip or curl it into the corner. He won his first international call-up and can expect to be a regular for Norway for years to come.

International reward...Huseklepp

Just smoking...Hamren

COACH OF THE SEASON
ERIK HAMREN (Rosenborg)
The 52-year-old Swede needed half a year before he had the eventual champions playing the way he wanted. After spells with Swedish clubs he went to Denmark and won the league title with Aalborg in 2008. Will now also take charge of Sweden's national side.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
MAKHTAR THIOUME (Molde)
From his attacking midfield role, the Senegalese has been the perfect conduit to Molde's pacy strikers. Unrivalled technique and ball skills have made him a stand-out.

We get a kick out of the title...Rosenborg's Osei Oviasu gets in the mood as his team-mates look on

TIPPELIGAEN - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	30	20	9	1	60	22	69
Molde	30	17	5	8	62	35	56
Stabaek	30	15	8	7	52	34	53
Odd Grenland	30	12	10	8	53	44	46
Brann	30	12	8	10	51	49	44
Tromso	30	10	10	10	35	36	40
Valerenga	30	12	4	14	47	50	40
Sandefjord	30	10	10	10	39	44	40
Start	30	10	10	10	46	52	40
Viking	30	9	11	10	38	40	38
Lillestrom	30	9	10	11	43	50	37
Stromsgodset	30	10	6	14	40	42	36
Aalesund	30	9	9	12	34	43	36
Fredrikstad	30	10	4	16	39	44	34
Bodo/Glimt	30	6	10	14	29	53	28
Lyn Oslo	30	2	10	18	29	59	16

SWEDEN AIK win title cliffhanger

Winner takes all...IFK Gothenburg's Sebastian Eriksson (left) and Flavio of AIK Solna battle it out in the championship decider

SUSPENSE ADDICTS had their fill on the final weekend of the 2009 Allsvenskan season as AIK Solna, one point clear at the top of the table, visited their closest challengers, IFK Gothenburg, for a nerve-jangling title decider that, 90 minutes of raw emotion later, left AIK as the last men standing to clinch a first domestic crown since 1998, courtesy of a come-from-behind 2-1 win.

IFK looked to have given themselves a real chance of grabbing glory when they took the lead on the half hour, Thomas Olsson redirecting an Erik Lund shot into the net with his chest. However, one of the main traits of the AIK class of 2009 is character and they rocked a sold-out Gamla Ullevi by mounting a second-half fightback.

Shortly after the restart, Martin Kayongo-Mutumba set up Brazilian striker Antonio Flavio for the equaliser. Then, five minutes from time, the coup de grace was provided by skipper Daniel Tjernstrom following great approach work from Liberia's Dulee Johnson.

Led expertly by coach Mikael Stahre, AIK totally deserved their 11th title. So disappointing in the previous campaign, they had a uniformity and belief that no other side could match.

In Argentinian Ivan Obolo and mid-season signing Flavio, they had a front line to die for, while conceding just 20 goals in 30 matches as Per Karlsson and his Dutch central defensive partner Jos Hooiveld rarely put a foot wrong.

AIK's reward is a place in the preliminaries of the 2010-11 Champions League, while IFK will be joined in the Europa League by Elfsborg – for whom veteran midfielder Anders Svensson was as influential as ever, while summer signing from Gefle, wing wizard Amadou Jawo, blew hot and cold – and last term's champions, Kalmar. The latter might have made a better fist of defending their title if they had not sold exciting young forward Rasmus Elm to AZ of Holland in August.

A toothless Hammarby, champions as recently as 2001, were relegated, accompanied by Orgryte and their high-profile attackers, Alvaro Santos and Marcus Allback. They will be replaced by Mjallby and Atvidaberg, while Djurgarden must fight to retain their top-flight status in a play-off with Assyriska.

After a wonderful career spanning two decades, iconic striker Henrik Larsson bid a tearful farewell to the game after his beloved Helsingborg's 2-0 defeat at home to Djurgarden. Now 38, Larsson scored over 300 goals for Feyenoord, Celtic, Barcelona, Manchester United and in two spells with his home-town club. His 37 goals in 106 appearances put him third in the national team's scoring charts.

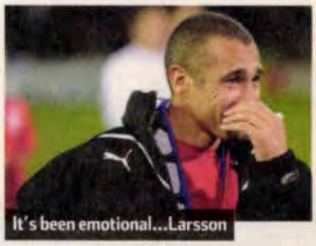
Helsingborg will retire his No 17 shirt in honour of their most famous son. "I'm normally quite a cool person but now I feel like I could cry," said a visibly moved Larsson. "I've already an empty feeling inside and the trick will be to fill it sooner rather than later."

The word is he will turn to coaching, either in Sweden or Scotland, where his exploits at Celtic made him so popular.

Nick Bidwell

ALLSVENSKAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIK Solna	30	18	7	5	36	20	61
IFK Gothenburg	30	17	6	7	53	24	57
Elfsborg	30	15	10	5	43	34	55
Kalmar	30	14	8	8	53	39	50
Hacken	30	13	9	8	43	30	48
Orebro	30	12	9	9	33	32	45
Malmo	30	11	10	9	40	25	43
Helsingborg	30	13	4	13	39	39	43
Trelleborg	30	11	8	11	41	34	41
Gefle	30	10	9	11	28	38	39
GAIS	30	8	11	11	41	38	35
Brommapojkarna	30	9	7	14	32	46	34
Halmstad	30	8	8	14	29	43	32
Djurgarden	30	8	5	17	24	49	29
Orgryte	30	6	7	17	27	49	25
Hammarby	30	6	4	20	22	44	22


It's been emotional...Larsson

Cooking with GAIS...Wanderson

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
WANDERSON DO CARNO (GAIS)
The young Brazilian finished 2009 as the country's joint-top scorer with 18 goals – a most impressive feat for a midfielder. Also responsible for many assists, he joined GAIS in 2007 from River Atletico Clube, a minor-league side in his homeland.

COACH OF THE SEASON
MIKAEL STAHRE (AIK)
The 34-year-old former AIK youth team coach, in his first season at the helm, proved both an excellent motivator and tactically very shrewd, transforming an underachieving, disparate set of individuals into tightly knit champions. Previously with feeder club Vasby United, who he steered from the third to second division.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
ANTONIO FLAVIO (AIK)
The £180,000 AIK paid Sao Paulo state club Santo Andre in July for this pacy and imaginative attacker reaped an instant reward, as he found his feet in the Swedish top flight's rough and tumble.

PEOPLE in the news

Ramos lasts six weeks at CSKA

Frozen out in Moscow...Ramos could not arrest CSKA's slump

EUROPE

Former Real Madrid coach JUANDE RAMOS was sacked by CSKA Moscow after just six weeks following their 3-1 home defeat by FC Moscow, which saw them drop to fifth place in the league, 10 points behind leaders Rubin Kazan. Ramos replaced Brazilian Zico, who was sacked in September, but under the Spaniard CSKA's slump in form continued and included Champions League losses to Wolfsburg and Manchester United.

It's all over...Vieri

Take it as red...Strachan

Ramos was replaced by Krylya Sovetov's LEONID SLUTSKY, a former goalkeeper whose playing career was ended when he fell out of a tree.

Former Italy striker CHRISTIAN VIERI, who cost a then-world record fee of £32million when he joined Internazionale in 1999, announced his retirement at the age of 36, having cancelled his contract with Atalanta in April. During his career he also played for Torino, Juventus, Atletico Madrid, Lazio, Milan, Monaco and Fiorentina, and scored 23 goals in 49 international appearances.

Helsingborg striker HENRIK LARSSON announced his retirement at the end of the Swedish season. The 38-year-old, who won 106 caps for his country, scored over 300 goals during spells with Feyenoord, Celtic, Barcelona and Manchester United.

Former Coventry, Southampton and Celtic manager GORDON STRACHAN replaced GARETH SOUTHGATE as boss of English second-tier side Middlesbrough.

DWIGHT LODEWEGES stepped down as NEC Nijmegen coach after a 4-0 home defeat by PSV Eindhoven.

FRANCISZEK SMUDA has been appointed coach of Poland, replacing Dutchman Leo Beenhakker who was dismissed following a 3-0 World Cup qualifying loss to Slovenia.

ERIK HAMREN was appointed as national coach of Sweden after the Swedish FA negotiated his release from Norwegian champions Rosenborg. Hamren will continue to coach Rosenborg until August 2010, while also being released on international duty for his country. He replaces LARS LAGERBECK, who resigned last month following Sweden's failure to qualify for the 2010 World Cup finals.

Former Valencia and Internazionale coach HECTOR CUPER stepped down as national coach of Georgia two months before his contract was due to expire. He was subsequently appointed boss of Greek side Aris Thessaloniki.

Bologna bound...Appiah

AFRICA

Ghana captain STEPHEN APPIAH was set to join Italian club Bologna, pending a successful work permit application. Appiah has not had a club since leaving Fenerbahce in 2007.

Critical...Caceres

AMERICAS

Former Argentina defender FERNANDO CACERES, who helped win the 1993 Copa America and played at the 1994 World Cup, is in a coma after being shot in the head during an attempted robbery.

Former defender JUVENAL AMARIJO, the sole survivor from Brazil's starting XI that played Uruguay in the final match of the 1950 World Cup, has died in Salvador, aged 86.

Los Angeles Galaxy striker LANDON DONOVAN was named the national team's 2009 Player of the Year. It is the sixth time the 27-year-old has won the award in the last nine years. Everton goalkeeper Tim Howard was second, with Hull City striker Jozy Altidore third.

Simply the best...Donovan

ASIA

HONG MYUNG-BO, who captained South Korea to the semi-finals of the 2002 World Cup, has been appointed their Olympic football coach. Hong retired in 2004 after a spell with Los Angeles Galaxy and led the country's side at the Under-20 World Cup in Egypt.

Olympian...Hong Myung-Bo

Stopped in his tracks...Mazembe's Mihayo Kazembe (right) thwarts Joshua Obaje of Heartland in the first leg

AFRICA Mazembe triumph against the odds

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of Congo had to wait over four decades, several despotic dictators and a civil war before erupting into a rare day of joy as TP Mazembe won the African Champions League.

Success for the Lubumbashi-based club may have ultimately come from an own goal in the second leg of the Final, but their first title in 41 years was fully deserved – even if they did need the away-goal rule to overcome Heartland FC of Nigeria.

Defender Emmanuel Omodiagbe turned the ball into his own net in the 73rd minute of the return match, deflecting an effort from Narcisse Ekanga that was to prove decisive.

Mazembe were 2-1 down from the first leg in Owerri and therefore needed just a single-goal triumph in the return to win the title – and they made the breakthrough as the atmosphere at the tightly packed Stade Kenya in Lubumbashi was bordering on the hysterically nervous.

Heartland had just lost goalkeeper Austin Brown to injury before the own goal, but on the balance of play the Congolese had proven the better side over the two legs.

In the first leg in Nigeria, Mazembe had taken the lead through the talisman Tresor Mputu, though Heartland's Nigeria Under-20 international King Osanga had quickly replied with an equaliser.

Uche Agba then grabbed another for Heartland 10 minutes from time to give them a precarious lead for the return match just six days later.

The second leg provided Heartland with opportunities to extend their lead but Osanga had an effort blocked by Mbale Bawaka. At the other end, Brown made a fine stop to push a shot from Alain Kaluyitukadioko onto the woodwork and away for a corner.

Mazembe turned up the pressure in the second half, taking off the Zambian striker Given Singuluma and bringing on Guy Lusadisu, who provided the spark for a series of corners and a spell of telling pressure.

Lusadisu also set up the shot that Ekanga squeezed in and that Omodiagbe watched in horror as he mistakenly headed it past his own keeper in a vain attempt to clear.

Victory set off chaotic scenes for Mazembe, who reached four successive finals between 1967 and 1970, winning the title in 1967 and 1968.

"The eager work of the players was the secret of our success," said winning coach Diego Garzitto. "We have prepared feverishly the whole season and we were rewarded by the results.

"I tried to inculcate a spirit into my players and they accepted the challenge. We were not given any chance at the start of the season to win the Champions League but we wondered aloud what it would be like.

"It is a tremendous feat to have been able to have achieved it."

Mark Gleeson

Not giving up...Obaje (right) takes on Mazembe's back line once again

ASIA Steelers take the title

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

THE POWER in Asian club football remains firmly rooted in the east of the continent after South Korea's Pohang Steelers became the first team to be crowned champions for the third time.

Sergio Farias' side beat Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad 2-1 in the Final of the Asian Champions League as Pohang added their latest success to back-to-back victories in the now-defunct Asian Club Championship in the late 1990s.

Their victory follows on from the wins for compatriots Jeonbuk Hyundai in 2006 and Japanese sides Urawa Reds and Gamba Osaka, in 2007 and 2008 respectively.

Ittihad were the last side from the Middle East to win the title when they claimed the second of their back-to-back title wins in 2005, but Gabriel Calderon's Jeddah-based side were unable to make it a hat-trick of wins in six seasons.

Steelers victory came courtesy of a pair of goals from No Byung-jun and Kim Hyung-il in the 57th and 66th minutes respectively, before Mohammad Noor struck for Ittihad to set up a grandstand final 16 minutes.

The flurry of activity came after a cagey first half with both teams feeling their way into the game before it exploded into life in the second period.

Amine Chermiti almost gave Ittihad the lead less than 10 minutes after the restart when his effort cannoned off the crossbar with his side looking the more likely to score.

But Pohang refused to be overawed by their illustrious opponents and, 12 minutes into the second half, No gave his side the lead with a free-kick that seared through the Ittihad defensive wall to give Mabrouk Zaid little chance.

Nine minutes later, the result was all but sealed when Kim's powerful, twisting header found the back of the net to double Pohang's lead.

Ittihad pushed forward, trying to find a way back into the game, and with 74 minutes on the clock they did just that when Noor – so often the key man for Ittihad in the knockout stage of this season's competition – scored from close range.

But, despite the ensuing onslaught, Pohang held on to win the title and book their place in the Club World Cup in Abu Dhabi.

"Al Ittihad are a great team but so are we. I think 2-1 was a fair result," said Farias. "Our main players were marked tightly but the score line reflected the quality of the match.

"Al Ittihad also had set-piece opportunities but they were not able to take advantage and score.

"They marked us very severely and we couldn't counter-attack down the wings and that was a big challenge for us at the beginning.

"But we were able to live up to the fans' expectations and I'm very happy I could do that."

Calderon was left to lament a rare off-night for his team's forwards, who were unable to take full advantage of the opportunities they created.

"I think it was a high-quality game and our players should feel very proud," he insisted. "We didn't win but I was very satisfied with the quality of the play that my team demonstrated. Our players showed to the world the quality of Saudi Arabian football.

"It was positive that we could create so much. We've not always been at full strength but we've been able to perform well throughout the competition."

Michael Church

Pohang celebrate...goalscorer No (right) and Stevica Ristik lift the trophy

"It was a big challenge...but we were able to live up to the fans' expectations"

Pohang Steelers coach Sergio Farias

In front...No opens the scoring

CLUB WORLD CUP

Sabella's dream

Coaching latecomer guides Estudiantes' bid for world club title

TWO CONTRASTING coaching stories stand out in Argentina; both involving men who had little or no first-hand managerial experience until this year.

There is Diego Maradona, who at the end of last year took charge of Argentina with only a few club matches under his belt in the mid-1990s and struggled to get his national team to the 2010 World Cup.

Then there is Alejandro "Alex" Sabella, the former River Plate midfielder who displayed his ball skills at Sheffield United and Leeds United in England between 1978 and 1981.

Sabella has been a big success at Estudiantes de La Plata in a short time, having played there and won two Argentinian league titles in 1982 and 1983, and he slotted in brilliantly with his relaxed, low-profile style of management and astute judgement of opposition sides.

His success, with only five defeats in 36 matches in all competitions up to the end of October and no losses in 11 matches in the Libertadores Cup campaign, had observers wondering whether Passarella's achievements as River Plate coach were not largely down to the brains of Sabella in the background.

"The experience I had in all these years in my career as Daniel's assistant can help me at all times, not only in this matter of the [Club] World Cup," says Sabella, who is careful about the favourites tag that his team and Barcelona will carry into the semi-finals of the tournament in Abu Dhabi, warning that the champions of the other continents deserve utmost respect.

"Cruzeiro were favourites and they didn't win," he says of the team that Estudiantes beat to lift the Libertadores Cup in July. "On the pitch you see the best, on the track you see the good horses."

Referring to Estudiantes' three Libertadores Cup wins from 1968 to 1970, Sabella continues: "I trust in the heritage handed down to the players because they know the club.

"You've got to play the matches, you have to respect your rivals because they are very tough.

"A lot of people talk about Barcelona but there is a prior match that could be against Atlante, a very good team, and the African representatives will be very tough, they are physically strong. The Asians are also fast, resistant though perhaps technically they don't have the same quality."

Asked whether he could learn anything useful from Barcelona's difficulties in the Champions League against Rubin Kazan, Estudiantes' boss says: "When you analyse rivals you have to analyse the opponents that played against them and if you're used to 4-4-2 and those opponents line up differently it's not so much use to you.

"In this case, the Russian team won one match and drew the other so that gives you something to think about but you have to see if you have the same kind of players as them with similar characteristics."

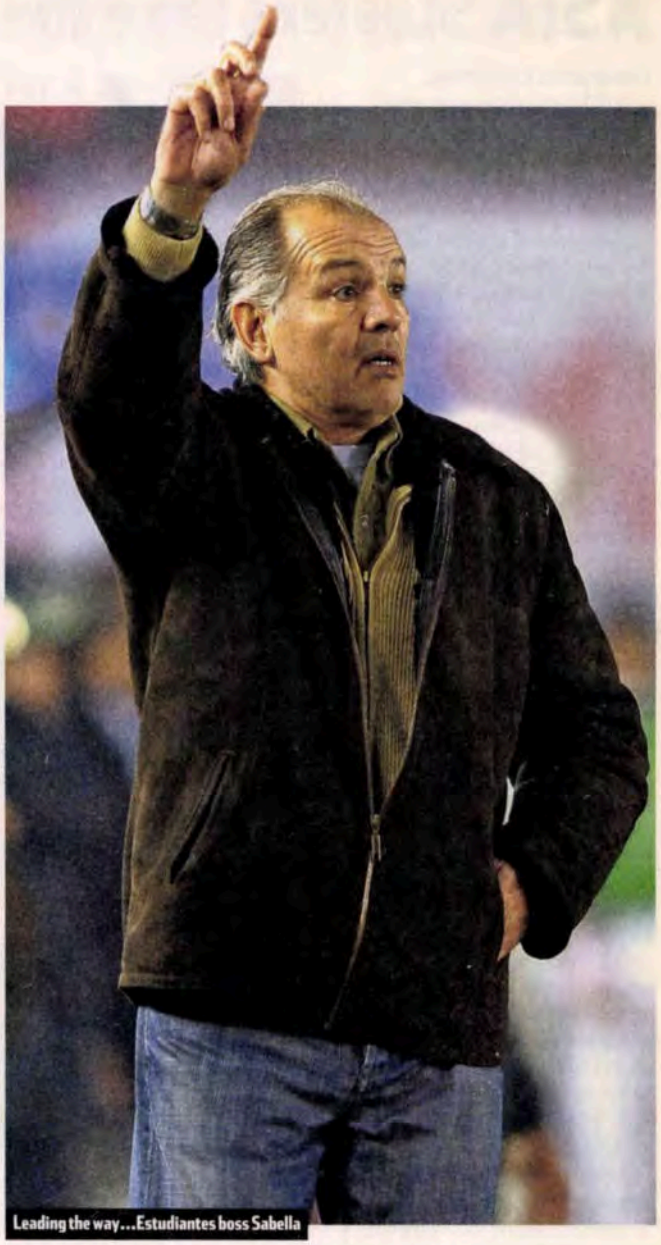
Rex Gowar

> "I trust in the heritage handed down to the players because they know the club. You have to respect your rivals" *Alex Sabella*

taking over in mid-March during the group stage of the Libertadores Cup and steering them, unbeaten from his debut, to their South American title and a place in the Club World Cup in Abu Dhabi.

The 55-year-old had never before been in charge of a team, having spent the bulk of his coaching career as Daniel Passarella's assistant, notably with Argentina from 1994 to the 1998 World Cup in France, and also with clubs in Mexico and Brazil.

Sabella was an Estudiantes man,



Leading the way...Estudiantes boss Sabella

Champions...Sabella and Juan Veron celebrate winning the Libertadores Cup

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Dec 9:	Al Ahli v Auckland City
Dec 11:	Team A* v Team B* (1)
Dec 12:	Al Ahli or Auckland City v Team C* (2)
Dec 15:	Winner 1 v Estudiantes
Dec 16:	5th-place play-off: Loser 1 v Loser 2
Dec 16:	Winner 2 v Barcelona
Dec 19:	3rd-place play-off
Dec 19:	Final

*Teams A, B and C to be drawn from Atlante, Mazembe and Pohang Steelers

The Teams

AL AHLI (hosts)

One of UAE's most prominent clubs and current holders of the premier league title. They do not have a strong international pedigree, having been eliminated from the group stages on the two occasions they have competed in the Asian Champions League. Name translates in Arabic as "national".

Key Player:
Young striker Ahmed Khalil will be looking to impress.

Young prospect...Khalil

Champions...Atlante

ATLANTE (CONCACAF)

Won the inaugural CONCACAF Champions League Final in May after beating fellow Mexican side Cruz Azul over two legs. Originally from Mexico City, they have been revived since their 2007 move to the coastal city of Cancun. Nicknamed Los Potros de Hierro (The Iron Colts).

Key Players:
Diminutive midfielder Christian Bermudez and former Argentina international Santiago Solari.

AUCKLAND CITY (Oceania)

The main beneficiaries of Australia's defection to the Asian confederation, Auckland surprisingly beat Waitakere United to win the New Zealand league title in a play-off earlier this year and then overcame difficult conditions to thrash Koloale of the Solomon Islands 7-2 in the away leg of the Oceania Champions League Final. Played in the 2006 Club World Cup in Japan, where they lost both their games, the opener 2-0 to Egypt's Al Ahly and the fifth-place play-off, 3-0 to Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors of South Korea.

Key Player:
Captain and former New Zealand international Ivan Vicelich.

BARCELONA (Europe)

The outstanding team in European club football last season, winning an historic treble of Champions League, Spanish league and Spanish Cup in a campaign which establisheds Lionel Messi as the world's best player. Coach Pep Guardiola, in his first season in charge, was lauded for his team's attacking play.

Key Players:
Lionel Messi, forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic, midfielders Xavi and Andres Iniesta.

Captain's example...Auckland's Vicelich

Key man...Perez of Estudiantes

ESTUDIANTES DE LA PLATA (South America)

Club from the outskirts of Buenos Aires who earned infamy in the late-1960s, when their physical approach and gamesmanship upset European sides such as Manchester United, Celtic and Feyenoord in the Intercontinental Cup. Now playing much more skilful soccer under coach Alex Sabella.

Key Players:
Playmaker Juan Veron, attacking midfielder Enzo Perez and striker Mauro Boselli.

African champs...Mazembe

MAZEMBE (Africa)

One of DR Congo's leading sides, the club from Lubumbashi were a major force in African football in the 1960s, winning successive Champions Cups. They returned to the top of the African game thanks to victory over Nigeria's Heartland FC in the African Champions League Final.

Key Player:
Striker Tresor Mputu has been linked with a number of European sides.

POHANG STEELERS (Asia)

Won the Asian club title in November when they beat Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad 2-1 on aggregate in the Final. Brazilian coach Sergio Farias has established himself as one of the leading coaches in South Korea in the last five seasons, guiding Steelers to the K-League title in 2007, followed by a Korean FA Cup win in 2008 and the AFC Champions League title this year.

Key Player:
Captain Hwang Jae-won has been a stalwart at the heart of the club's defence since 2006.

Favourites...European champions Barcelona

Defensive rock...Hwang

ENGLAND

Reds' record run

Manchester United equalled Ajax's record of going 14 games unbeaten away from home in the European Cup/ Champions League with a 1-0 win against CSKA Moscow.

Antonio Valencia, signed from Wigan for £17million, scored the goal that gave United their first-ever victory against Russian opposition.

Joy...Unirea's George Galamaz

ROMANIA

Making their mark

Unirea Urziceni recorded their first-ever victory in European competition with an emphatic 4-1 win away at Rangers.

The Scottish champions went ahead early on when Ricardo Gomes deflected a Pedro Mendes shot into his own goal after less than 90 seconds. Rangers' Steven Davis then missed a penalty before the visitors replied through Marius Bilasco, two own goals and Pablo Brandan.

SPAIN

Ibra is one of four

Zlatan Ibrahimovic's goal in Barcelona's shock 2-1 defeat to Rubin Kazan means he joins an elite group who have scored Champions League goals for four different clubs.

Apart from Barca, he has scored for Ajax, Juventus and Internazionale to match the achievements of Fernando Morientes and Nicolas Anelka.

However, Hernan Crespo with 25 Champions League goals – divided between Parma, Lazio, Inter, Chelsea and Milan is the only player to have scored for five clubs.

Bayern Munich's Arjen Robben will join the four-club scorers if he's on target for the German side this season.

RESULTS

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Oct 21

Bordeaux (Fra) 2 (Ciani 29, Planus 41)
Bayern Munich (Ger) 1 (Ciani og 6)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 31,321. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Bordeaux: Carrasso - Chalme, Ciani, Planus, Tremoulinas, Fernando, Diarra, Plasil (Gouffran 85), Gourcuff, Wendel (Jussie 85), Chamakh.
Bayern: Butt - Altintop, Van Buyten, Badstuber, Lahm, Tymoshchuk, Van Bommel (Ottl 78), Schweinsteiger, Muller, Toni (Gomez 78), Klose (Pranjic 74).
Sent off: Muller 30min, Van Buyten 88min.

Oct 21

Juventus (Ita) 1 (Chiellini 47)
Maccabi Haifa (Isr) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 21,303. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Juventus: Buffon - Zebina (Caceres 35), Cannavaro, Chiellini, Grosso, Felipe Melo (Poulsen 62), Sissoko, Camoranesi, Diego, Giovinco, Trezeguet (Amauri 81).
Maccabi: Davidovich - Meshumar, Keinan, Teixeira, Masilela (Zaguri 46), Osman, Boccoli, Culma, Rafaelov (Tiago Dutra 57), Arbeitman (Ghadir 46), Dvalishvili. *Sent off: Tiago Dutra 68min.*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bordeaux	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Juventus	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Bayern	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Maccabi Haifa	3	0	0	3	0	5	0

Group B

Oct 21

CSKA Moscow (Rus) 0
Manchester United (Eng) 1 (Valencia 86)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 51,250. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
CSKA: Akinfeev - Odiah, V Berezutsky, Ignashevich, A Berezutsky, Krasic, Semberas, Rahimic (Daniel Carvalho 90), Schennikov (Mamaev 62), Dzagoev, Necid (Piliev 73).
Man Utd: Van der Sar - Neville, Ferdinand (Brown 57), Vidic, O'Shea, Scholes (Owen 70), Fabio (Carrick 88), Valencia, Anderson, Nani, Berbatov.

Oct 21

Wolfsburg (Ger) 0
Besiktas (Tur) 0
Att: 25,778. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)
Wolfsburg: Benaglio - Riether, Ricardo Costa, Madlung, Schafer, Josue, Hasebe (Dejagah 67), Gentner, Misimovic, Dzeko, Grafite. *Sent off: Grafite 74min.*
Besiktas: Rustu - Ibrahim Kas, Sivok, Ferrari, Ibrahim Uzulmez, Fink (Inceman 87), Ekrem, Ernst, Tello (Tabata 81), Nihat, Bobo (Nobre 88).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	3	3	0	0	4	1	9
Wolfsburg	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
CSKA Moscow	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Besiktas	3	0	1	2	1	3	1

Group C

Oct 21

Real Madrid (Spa) 2 (Raul 19, Drenthe 76)
Milan (Ita) 3 (Pirlo 62, Alexandre Pato 66, 88)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 71,569. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Sergio Ramos, Pepe, Albiol, Marcelo, Xabi Alonso, L Diarra, Granero (Drenthe 67), Kaka, Benzema, Raul.
Milan: Dida - Oddo, Nesta, Thiago Silva, Zambrotta, Ambrosini, Pirlo, Seedorf, Alexandre Pato, Ronaldinho (Flamini 90), Inzaghi (Borriello 60).

Oct 21

Zurich (Swi) 0
Marseille (Fra) 1 (Heinze 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,300. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Zurich: Leoni - Stahel, Tihinen, Rochat, Koch, Okonkwo, Aegerter, Gajic (Djuric 72), Margairaz (Abdi 84), Vonlanthen (Nikci 84), Alphonse.
Marseille: Mandanda - Bonnart, Mbia, Hilton, Heinze, Cisse, Cheyrou (Abriel 64), Valbuena (Kone 65), Gonzalez (Kabore 82), Niang, Brandao.
Sent off: Bonnart 90min.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Real Madrid	3	2	0	1	10	5	6
Marseille	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Zurich	3	1	0	2	3	6	3

Group D

Oct 21

Chelsea (Eng) 4 (Kalou 41, 52, Lampard 69, Perea og 90)
Atletico Madrid (Spa) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 39,997. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Chelsea: Cech - Belletti, Ivanovic, Terry, A Cole (Malouda 75), Ballack, Essien, Lampard, Deco, Kalou (Zhirkov 73), Anelka (Sturridge 78).
Atletico: Asenjo - Ujfalusi, Perea, Dominguez, Antonio Lopez, Cleber Santana (Rodriguez 67), Paulo Assuncao (Jurado 54), Raul Garcia, Simao (Reyes 77), Forlan, Aguero.

Oct 21

Porto (Por) 2 (Hulk 33, pen 48)
APOEL Nicosia (Cyp) 1 (Pereira og 22)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 31,212. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Porto: Helton - Fucile, Rolando, Bruno Alves, Pereira, Fernando, Gonzalez, Raul Meireles (Sapunaru 90), Hulk, Falcao Garcia (Farias 87), Rodriguez (Guarin 68). *Sent off: Gonzalez 75min.*
APOEL: Chiotis - Satsias (Papathanasiou 78), Broerse, Grncarov, Elia, Nuno Morais, Michael (Alexandrou 59), Kosowski (Breska 38), Helio Pinto, Charalambidis, Mirosavljevic.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	3	3	0	0	6	0	9
Porto	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
APOEL	3	0	1	2	1	3	1
At Madrid	3	0	1	2	0	6	1

Group E

Oct 20

Debrecen (Hun) 3 (Czvitkovics 2, Rudolf 28, Coulibaly 88)
Fiorentina (Ita) 4 (Mutu 6, 20, Gilardino 10, Santana 37)
HT: 2-4. **Att:** 41,500. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
Debrecen: Poleksic - Bodnar, Komlosi, Meszaros (Szelesi 30), Leandro, Czvitkovics, Varga, Kiss (Laczko 88), Szakaly (Dombi 57), Coulibaly, Rudolf.
Fiorentina: Frey - Comotto, Dainelli (Natali 56), Gamberini, Pasqual, Santana (Jorgensen 68), Zanetti (Montolivo 46), Donadel, Vargas, Mutu, Gilardino.

Oct 20

Liverpool (Eng) 1 (Benayoun 41)
Lyon (Fra) 2 (Gonalons 72, Delgado 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 41,562. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Liverpool: Reina - Kelly (Skrtel 74), Agger, Carragher, Insua, Mascherano, Lucas, Kuijt, Gerrard (Fabio Aurelio 25), Benayoun (Voronin 85), Ngog.
Lyon: Lloris - Reveillere, Cris (Gonalons 43), Toulalan, Cissokho, Makoun, Kallstrom, Govou, Pjanic, Ederson (Gomis 61), Lopez (Delgado 86).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
Fiorentina	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Liverpool	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Debrecen	3	0	0	3	3	9	0

Group F

Oct 20

Barcelona (Spa) 1 (Ibrahimovic 48)
Rubin Kazan (Rus) 2 (Ryazantsev 2, Gokdeniz 73)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 55,930. **Ref:** Duhamel (Fra)
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves (Busquets 90), Pique, Marquez (Keita 80), Abidal, Xavi, Toure, Iniesta, Messi, Ibrahimovic, Pedro (Bojan 66).
Rubin: Ryzhikov - Salukvadze, Sharonov, Cesar Navas, Ansaldi, Noboa, Semak (Murawski 43), Kaleshin, Gokdeniz (Popov 90), Ryazantsev (Kasaev 83), Dominguez.

Oct 20

Internazionale (Ita) 2 (Stankovic 35, Samuel 47)
Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr) 2 (Mikhalik 5, Lucio og 40)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 34,721. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Lucio, Samuel, Chivu, Zanetti, Cambiasso (Materazzi 86), Muntari (Suazo 46), Stankovic (Vieira 85), Sneijder, Eto'o.
Dynamo: Bogush - Eremenko, Khacheridi, Leandro Almeida, Gerson Magrao (Betao 70), Mikhalik, Vukojevic, Shevchenko, Ninkovic (Husiev 69), Yarmolenko, Milevskyi (Kravets 90).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Dynamo Kyiv	3	1	1	1	5	5	4
Rubin Kazan	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Internazionale	3	0	3	0	3	3	3

Group G

Oct 20

Rangers (Sco) 1 (Ricardo Gomes og 2)
Unirea Urziceni (Rom) 4 (Bilasco 32, Lafferty og 49, McCulloch og 59, Brandan 65)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 39,476. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
Rangers: McGregor - Whittaker, McCulloch, Weir, Papac, Thomson, Rothen (Novo 66), Davis, Pedro Mendes (Lafferty 46), Naismith, Miller.
Urziceni: Tudor - Galamaz, Maftei, Bruno Fernandes, Ricardo Gomes, Apostol, Nicu (Onofras 19), Brandan, Varga (Paduretu 89), Balan (Frunza 75), Bilasco.

Oct 20

Stuttgart (Ger) 1 (Elson 74)
Sevilla (Spa) 3 (Squillaci 23, 72, Jesus Navas 55)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 37,000. **Ref:** Vink (Hol)
Stuttgart: Lehmann - Osorio, Tasci, Boulahrouz, Boka, Trasch (Hitzlsperger 69), Kuzmanovic, Khedira, Cacau (Pogrebnyak 69), Hleb (Elson 69), Schieber.
Sevilla: Javi Varas - Sergio Sanchez, Squillaci, Dragutinovic, Fernando Navarro, Lolo, Zokora, Jesus Navas, Adriano (Perotti 37), Luis Fabiano (Duscher 46), Kanoute (Kone 90).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sevilla	3	3	0	0	9	2	9
Urziceni	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Stuttgart	3	0	2	1	3	5	2
Rangers	3	0	1	2	3	9	1

Group H

Oct 20

AZ Alkmaar (Hol) 1 (Mendes da Silva 90)
Arsenal (Eng) 1 (Fabregas 36)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,666. **Ref:** Hansson (Swe)
AZ: Romero - Jaliens, Moisander (Wernbloom 85), Moreno, Poulsen, Holman (Pelle 73), Mendes da Silva, Schaars, Martens (Lens 69), El Hamdaoui, Dembele.
Arsenal: Mannone - Sagna, Gallas, Vermaelen, Clichy, Song, Diaby, Eboue (Ramsey 83), Fabregas, Arshavin, Van Persie (Vela 75).

Oct 20

Olympiakos (Gre) 2 (Mitroglou 43, Stoltidis 90)
Standard Liege (Blg) 1 (De Camargo 37)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 29,889. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
Olympiakos: Nikopolidis - Zewlakow, A Papadopoulos, Mellberg, Raul Bravo, Maresca, Dudu Cearense, Galletti, Oscar, Zairi (Stoltidis 72), Mitroglou.
Standard: Bolat - Camozzato, Sarr, Felipe, Ricardo Rocha, Witsel, Mangala, Dalmat (Carcela-Gonzalez 48), De Camargo (Nicaise 89), Jovanovic, Mbokani.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	3	2	1	0	6	3	7
Olympiakos	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
AZ Alkmaar	3	0	2	1	2	3	2
Standard	3	0	1	2	4	6	1

Top two in each group qualify for 1st knockout round; 3rd-placed teams enter Europa League at 1st knockout round stage

EUROPA LEAGUE

Update in next month's issue

AUSTRIA

Oct 17: Ried 3 Kapfenberger 0; Austria Wien 1 Salzburg 0; Mattersburg 3 LASK 2; Austria Karnten 0 Wiener Neustadt 0.
Oct 18: Sturm 1 Rapid 0.
Oct 24: Austria Karnten 1 Kapfenberger 1.
Oct 25: Austria Wien 3 LASK 0; Salzburg 1 Ried 1; Wiener Neustadt 0 Sturm 0; Rapid 4 Mattersburg 0.
Oct 28: Ried 3 Wiener Neustadt 0; LASK 0 Salzburg 0; Kapfenberger 1 Austria Wien 0; Mattersburg 0 Sturm 2; Austria Karnten 1 Rapid 3.
Oct 31: Sturm 4 Austria Karnten 0; Salzburg 2 Mattersburg 0; Wiener Neustadt 4 Austria Wien 3; Rapid 1 Ried 0.
Nov 1: Kapfenberger 7 LASK 2.

On target...Ibrahimovic

ARMENIA

Pyunik pick up title

Pyunik won 3-1 at Shirak to clinch their ninth consecutive championship. Mika finished as runners-up, with Ulisses in third place.

AZERBAIJAN

Derby defeats for Baku

Bulent Korkmaz, who resigned as coach of Turkish giants Galatasaray in June, has taken over at FK Baku. He won his first game in charge, at Turan Tovuz (1-0), but then suffered successive defeats against city rivals Inter Baku (0-1) and Neftchi Baku (0-2).

CROATIA

FK turn the tables

Bottom of the league NK Zagreb inflicted a first defeat of the season on table-topping neighbours Dinamo, sealing victory with a 61st-minute goal from Davor Vugrinec and playing the last half an hour with just 10 men following the dismissal of Ivan Krstanovic.

Meanwhile, Dinamo were docked three points in the Europa League and ordered to play two home European games behind closed doors following crowd disturbances during their 3-0 win away to Timisoara of Romania.

Costly...Dinamo (left) won in Romania

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	14	8	4	2	31	15	28
Rapid	13	8	3	2	30	11	27
Sturm	13	8	3	2	23	10	27
Austria Wien	14	8	2	4	26	17	26
Ried	14	5	5	4	20	15	20
LASK	14	4	3	7	33	38	15
W Neustadt	14	4	3	7	19	28	15
Mattersburg	14	5	0	9	16	28	15
Kapfenberger	14	4	2	8	15	25	14
A Karnten	14	1	3	10	13	39	6

BELGIUM

Oct 17: Zulte Waregem 4 Germinal Beerschot 0; Anderlecht 2 Charleroi 0; Lokeren 1 Cercle Brugge 1; Kortrijk 2 Roeselare 0; Mouscron 2 St Truiden 1; Westerlo 2 Standard 0.
Oct 18: Genk 1 Mechelen 2; Club Brugge 1 Gent 0.
Oct 23: Lokeren 0 Genk 2.
Oct 24: Standard 1 Zulte Waregem 1; St Truiden 1 Gent 2; Charleroi 1 Westerlo 1; Cercle Brugge 1 Kortrijk 1; Germinal Beerschot 3 Mouscron 2.
Oct 25: Roeselare 2 Club Brugge 3; Mechelen 0 Anderlecht 2.
Oct 30: Mouscron 0 Standard 0.
Oct 31: Club Brugge 1 St Truiden 0; Anderlecht 2 Lokeren 0; Zulte Waregem 2 Charleroi 2; Kortrijk 2 Mechelen 0; Westerlo 2 Roeselare 2.
Nov 1: Gent 0 Germinal Beerschot 1.
Nov 2: Genk 2 Cercle Brugge 0.

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	13	9	3	1	28	15	30
Anderlecht	13	9	2	2	24	11	29
Standard	13	5	7	1	21	11	22
Mechelen	13	7	0	6	19	19	21
Germinal B	13	6	3	4	16	17	21
Z Waregem	13	5	5	3	23	19	20
Gent	13	5	3	5	21	16	18
St Truiden	13	5	2	6	16	18	17
Genk	13	4	5	4	18	15	17
Kortrijk	13	4	5	4	16	15	17
Westerlo	13	4	3	6	15	22	15
Charleroi	13	3	5	5	16	23	14
Cercle Brugge	13	3	4	6	19	21	13
Lokeren	13	3	2	8	16	24	11
Mouscron	13	2	5	6	13	20	11
Roeselare	13	1	4	8	16	31	7

BULGARIA

Oct 16: Sliven 0 Chernomorets 1.
Oct 17: Botev 0 CSKA 1; Montana 2 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3; Pirin 2 Sportist 0; Lovech 1 Slavia 0.
Oct 18: Lokomotiv Mezdra 1 Cherno More 2; Levski 0 Beroe 1.
Oct 19: Minyor 1 Lokomotiv Sofia 2.
Oct 23: Beroe 0 Montana 0.
Oct 24: Lokomotiv Mezdra 4 Pirin 0; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1 Sliven 2; Lokomotiv Sofia 0 Lovech 1; Chernomorets 2 Botev 0.
Oct 25: Sportist 2 Levski 3; CSKA 0 Minyor 3.
Oct 26: Cherno More 1 Slavia 1.
Oct 30: Pirin 1 Cherno More 0.
Oct 31: Botev 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0; Minyor 2 Chernomorets 0; Montana 1 Sportist 0; Levski 3 Lokomotiv Mezdra 1.
Nov 1: Slavia 0 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Lovech 2 CSKA 0.
Nov 2: Sliven 1 Beroe 1.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chernomorets	11	8	2	1	20	7	26
CSKA	11	8	1	2	20	6	25
Lovech	10	8	1	1	17	3	25
Lok Sofia	11	6	3	2	16	11	21
Beroe	11	4	5	2	11	10	17
Levski	10	5	1	4	19	12	16
Minyor	11	5	1	5	14	9	16
Cherno More	11	4	3	4	13	8	15
Slavia	11	4	3	4	8	10	15
Pirin	11	4	3	4	7	9	15
Montana	11	3	5	3	10	11	14
Lok Mezdra	11	4	0	7	14	23	12
Sliven	11	2	2	7	11	19	8
Lok Plovdiv	11	2	2	7	10	20	8
Sportist	11	2	1	8	9	22	7
Botev	11	1	1	9	6	25	4

CROATIA

Oct 16: Inter 4 Zadar 3.
Oct 17: Slaven 3 Istra 0; Lokomotiva 3 Sesvete 2; Rijeka 1 Osijek 1; Varteks 3 Medimurje 0; Zagreb 1 Dinamo 0; Cibalia 2 Karlovac 2.
Oct 18: Hajduk 0 Sibenik 1.
Oct 23: Slaven 5 Inter 2.
Oct 24: Istra 1 Sibenik 2; Sesvete 2 Varteks 2; Karlovac 1 Hajduk 0; Medimurje 4 Zagreb 2; Osijek 3 Lokomotiva 0; Zadar 1 Rijeka 1.
Oct 25: Dinamo 1 Cibalia 1.
Oct 30: Inter 1 Istra 0.
Oct 31: Lokomotiva 1 Zadar 0; Cibalia 3 Medimurje 0; Hajduk 2 Dinamo 1; Rijeka 2 Slaven 3; Varteks 1 Osijek 2; Zagreb 4 Sesvete 2; Sibenik 1 Karlovac 0.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	13	9	2	2	39	8	29
Sibenik	13	8	3	2	15	9	27
Cibalia	13	7	4	2	19	6	25
Osijek	13	7	3	3	26	20	24
Karlovac	13	6	5	2	13	7	23
Slaven	13	7	2	4	25	22	23
Rijeka	13	5	4	4	23	17	19
Lokomotiva	13	6	1	6	16	20	19
Hajduk	13	5	3	5	13	11	18
Medimurje	13	5	1	7	19	30	16
Varteks	13	4	3	6	14	19	15
Zadar	13	4	3	6	11	19	15
Inter	13	4	2	7	18	22	14
Istra	13	2	3	8	12	27	9
Sesvete	13	1	4	8	17	28	7
Zagreb	13	2	1	10	11	26	7

CZECH REPUBLIC

Oct 17: Pribram 0 Teplice 3; Sparta 1 Ceske Budejovice 1; Ostrava 1 Liberec 0.
Oct 18: Mlada Boleslav 4 Bohemians 2; Bohemians 1905 0 Slovacko 1; Kladno 0 Slavia 2; Olomouc 5 Brno 0.
Oct 19: Jablonec 0 Plzen 1.
Oct 24: Slovacko 2 Kladno 0; Liberec 1 Pribram 0; Ostrava 3 Bohemians 1905 1; Brno 0 Jablonec 1; Teplice 2 Mlada Boleslav 2.
Oct 25: Ceske Budejovice 0 Plzen 0; Bohemians 2 Sparta 3.
Oct 26: Slavia 1 Olomouc 2.
Oct 31: Pribram 1 Slavia 0; Sparta 1 Ostrava 1.
Nov 1: Jablonec 1 Bohemians 0; Kladno 0 Teplice 2; Bohemians 1905 0 Liberec 1; Mlada Boleslav 3 Slovacko 2; Olomouc 2 Ceske Budejovice 0.
Nov 2: Plzen 1 Brno 1.

ESM Team of the Month

European Sports Magazines — OCTOBER 2009

HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Magazines group vote for their first XI from Europe's top leagues. The players with the most votes make the overall team. For details of how ESM members voted this month, visit: **worldsoccer.com/esm11**

ESTONIA

Levadia are unstoppable

Levadia Tallinn beat JK Maag Tammeka Tartu 2-0 to claim their fourth consecutive Estonian title – and seventh in their 11-year history – with four league games remaining.

Anton Aristov's own goal and Vitali Leitan's long-range strike took Levadia's unbeaten run in the league to a record 59 games.

Off again...Vidic

FRANCE

Swine flu KOs PSG's clash with OM

The game between Marseille and Paris Saint-Germain on October 25 was postponed after three PSG players – Jeremy Clement, Ludovic Giuly and Mamadou Sakho – were diagnosed as having swine flu.

The cancellation of the match represents a first in the French championship as never before has a Ligue 1 match been postponed for health reasons.

Eleven games into the season, struggling Grenoble remain the only team in any of Europe's main leagues yet to register a point. They trail leaders Bordeaux by 25 points.

Meanwhile, Valenciennes have signed defender Bobo Balde, who was a free agent after being released by Scottish side Celtic at the end of last season.

3 consecutive Manchester United versus Liverpool games in which Nemanja Vidic has been sent-off

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Teplice	13	8	5	0	26	10	29
Jablonec	13	9	2	2	15	9	29
Ostrava	13	7	4	2	18	12	25
Sparta	13	5	8	0	14	7	23
Plzen	13	6	4	3	14	11	22
M Boleslav	13	5	4	4	22	16	19
Slavia	13	5	4	4	17	12	19
Liberec	13	5	2	6	15	16	17
Pribram	13	5	2	6	12	14	17
Brno	13	4	5	4	11	14	17
Olomouc	13	4	4	5	17	13	16
Slovacko	13	4	1	8	13	19	13
Boh'ians 1905	13	2	5	6	6	10	11
Kladno	13	3	2	8	9	20	11
C Budejovice	13	1	5	7	6	18	8
Bohemians	13	2	1	10	11	25	7

DENMARK

Oct 17: Nordsjaelland 0 OB 2.
Oct 18: AaB 1 Randers 1; HB Koge 0 Copenhagen 2; Silkeborg 2 Esbjerg 2; Brondby 1 Midtjylland 1.
Oct 19: SonderjyskE 1 AGF 0.
Oct 24: Randers 1 OB 1.
Oct 25: Esbjerg 2 SonderjyskE 0; Midtjylland 2 HB Koge 1; Copenhagen 1 Silkeborg 0; AaB 1 Brondby 2.
Oct 26: AGF 0 Nordsjaelland 2.
Oct 31: AGF 2 Midtjylland 2.
Nov 1: Randers 0 Silkeborg 2; Nordsjaelland 0 Brondby 1; SonderjyskE 0 HB Koge 0; Esbjerg 0 Copenhagen 0.
Nov 2: OB 1 AaB 1.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
OB	14	8	5	1	24	14	29
Copenhagen	14	8	4	2	25	10	28
Esbjerg	14	8	4	2	25	14	28
Brondby	14	8	3	3	32	21	27
Silkeborg	14	6	5	3	25	17	23
AGF	14	6	3	5	21	21	21
AaB	14	6	2	6	18	12	20
SonderjyskE	14	4	3	7	11	16	15
Midtjylland	14	4	3	7	17	25	15
Nordsjaelland	14	4	2	8	15	22	14
HB Koge	14	1	4	9	12	35	7
Randers	14	0	4	10	10	28	4

ENGLAND

Saturday, October 17
Arsenal 3 (Van Persie 16, Diaby 18, Arshavin 84)
Birmingham 1 (Bowyer 38) Att: 60,082

Aston Villa 2 (Dunne 32, Collins 52)
Chelsea 1 (Drogba 15) Att: 39,047

Everton 1 (Bilyaletdinov 88)
Wolverhampton 1 (Doyle 76) Att: 39,319

Manchester United 2 (Knight og 4, Valencia 33)
Bolton 1 (Taylor 75) Att: 75,103

Portsmouth 1 (Boateng 59)
Tottenham 2 (King 29, Defoe 45) Att: 20,821

Stoke 2 (Beattie pen 11, 69)
West Ham 1 (Upson 34) Att: 27,026

Sunderland 1 (Bent 5)
Liverpool 0 Att: 47,327

Sunday, October 18
Blackburn 3 (Dunn 9, Di Santo 21, Chimbonda 43)
Burnley 2 (Blake 5, Eagles 90) Att: 26,689

Wigan 1 (N'Zogbia 45)
Manchester City 1 (Petrov 46) Att: 20,005

Monday, October 19
Fulham 2 (Zamora 43, Kamara 64)
Hull 0 Att: 22,943

Saturday, October 24
Birmingham 2 (Ridgewell 37, McFadden 48)
Sunderland 1 (Dann og 82) Att: 21,723

Burnley 1 (Fletcher 4)
Wigan 3 (Rodallega 11, 51, Boyce 76) Att: 19,430

Chelsea 5 (Givet og 20, Lampard 48, pen 59, Essien 52, Drogba 64)
Blackburn 0 Att: 40,836

Hull 0
Portsmouth 0 Att: 23,720

Tottenham 0
Stoke 1 (Whelan 86) Att: 36,031

Wolverhampton 1 (Ebanks-Blake pen 83)
Aston Villa 1 (Agbonlahor 79) Att: 28,734

Sunday, October 25
Bolton 3 (Lee 16, Cahill 27, Klasnic 86)
Everton 2 (Saha 32, Fellaini 55) Att: 21,547

Liverpool 2 (Fernando Torres 65, Ngog 90)
Manchester United 0 Att: 44,188

Manchester City 2 (Lescott 54, Petrov 60)
Fulham 2 (Duff 62, Dempsey 68) Att: 44,906

West Ham 2 (Cole 74, Diamanti pen 80)
Arsenal 2 (Van Persie 16, Gallas 37) Att: 34,442

Saturday, October 31
Arsenal 3 (Van Persie 42, 60, Fabregas 43)
Tottenham 0 Att: 60,103

Bolton 0
Chelsea 4 (Lampard pen 45, Deco 61, Knight og 82, Drogba 90) Att: 22,680

Burnley 2 (Alexander pen 20, 77)
Hull 0 Att: 20,219

Everton 1 (Bilyaletdinov 45)
Aston Villa 1 (Carew 46) Att: 36,648

Fulham 3 (Zamora 24, Nevland 73, Dempsey 87)
Liverpool 1 (Fernando Torres 42) Att: 25,700

Manchester United 2 (Berbatov 55, Rooney 87)
Blackburn 0 Att: 74,658

Portsmouth 4 (Dindane 35, 65, pen 90, Piquionne 45)
Wigan 0 Att: 18,212

Stoke 2 (Elokobi og 17, Etherington 44)
Wolverhampton 2 (Craddock 46, 64) Att: 27,500

Sunderland 2 (Reid 39, Richardson 76)
West Ham 2 (Franco 30, Cole 36) Att: 39,033

Sunday, November 1
Birmingham 0
Manchester City 0 Att: 21,462

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	11	9	0	2	28	8	27
Man Utd	11	8	1	2	23	11	25
Arsenal	10	7	1	2	32	13	22
Man City	10	5	4	1	18	11	19
Tottenham	11	6	1	4	21	17	19
Liverpool	11	6	0	5	25	16	18
Aston Villa	10	5	3	2	14	9	18
Sunderland	11	5	2	4	20	17	17
Stoke	11	4	4	3	11	13	16
Burnley	11	5	0	6	12	22	15
Fulham	10	4	2	4	13	13	14
Wigan	11	4	1	6	12	21	13
Everton	10	3	3	4	13	16	12
Birmingham	11	3	2	6	8	12	11
Bolton	10	3	2	5	14	19	11
Wolves	11	2	4	5	11	18	10
Blackburn	10	3	1	6	11	24	10
Hull	11	2	2	7	8	24	8
West Ham	10	1	4	5	13	17	7
Portsmouth	11	2	1	8	9	15	7

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Fernando Torres (Liverpool)
9 Didier Drogba (Chelsea)
8 Darren Bent (Sunderland)

FAROE ISLANDS

FAROE ISLANDS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HB	27	16	7	4	59	37	55
EB/Streymur	27	15	5	7	56	34	50
Vikingur	27	14	5	8	51	36	47
NSI	27	13	5	9	56	46	44
B68	27	12	7	8	48	41	43
AB	27	9	7	11	29	35	34
IF	27	8	6	13	45	48	30
B36	27	7	7	13	37	53	28
KI (R)	27	6	6	15	30	57	24
07 Vestur (R)	27	4	7	16	39	63	19

Promoted: VB/Sumba, B71

FINLAND

Oct 17: Lahti 1 Inter 3; RoPS 1 KuPS 0; Haka 2 MyPa 3; HJK 1 Jaro 1; JJK 2 Tampere 2; VPS 0 Mariehamn 0; TPS 0 Honka 0.

Final standings – see page 84

FRANCE

Saturday, October 17
Auxerre 1 (Birsa pen 73)
Bordeaux 0 Att: 16,496

Le Mans 1 (Lamah 63)
Boulogne 1 (Robert 90) Att: 7,912

Lille 0
Rennes 0 Att: 14,409

Lyon 0
Sochaux 2 (Faty 17, Privat 89) Att: 36,489

Montpellier 2 (Ait-Fana 54, Camara 60)
Saint-Etienne 1 (Bergessio pen 71) Att: 22,953

Nancy 0
Marseille 3 (Valbuena 5, Brandao 78, Abriel 81) Att: 20,057

Valenciennes 2 (Samassa 18, Ben Khalfallah 24)
Grenoble 0 Att: 12,177

Sunday, October 18
Lorient 4 (Mvuemba 39, Vahirua 48, Diarra 77, Gameiro 89)
Nice 1 (Remy 61) Att: 10,514

Monaco 2 (Nene 9, pen 67)
Lens 0 Att: 7,603

Toulouse 1 (Ebondo 74)
Paris Saint-Germain 0 Att: 23,754

Saturday, October 24
Bordeaux 3 (Ovono og 4, Chamakh 67, Bellion 83)
Le Mans 0 Att: 27,737

Boulogne 1 (Blayac 66)
Monaco 3 (Park 36, Nene 86, 90) Att: 13,650

Grenoble 1 (Ljuboja 53)
Nancy 2 (Jemmali og 74, Hadji pen 89) Att: 15,995

Nice 4 (Bagayoko 17, Cissokho og 40, Hellebuyck 69, Remy 75)
Lyon 1 (Ederson 84) Att: 10,973

Rennes 3 (Marveaux 34, Sow 50, Gyan 90)
Montpellier 0 Att: 23,311

Saint-Etienne 0
Valenciennes 2 (Audel 17, Ducourtioux 90) Att: 27,631

Sochaux 1 (Perquis 8)
Lorient 0 Att: 11,379

Sunday, October 25
Auxerre 3 (Jelen 36, 78, Niculae 82)
Lille 2 (Kouassi 26, Frau 40) Att: 11,285

Lens 0
Toulouse 2 (Sissoko 35, Gignac 56) Att: 32,576

Saturday, October 31
Auxerre 2 (Jelen 16, 29)
Montpellier 1 (Dzodic 90) Att: 11,373

Bordeaux 1 (Planus 62)
Monaco 0 Att: 32,393

Boulogne 1 (Cuvillier 16)
Nancy 2 (Dia 10, Hadji 81) Att: 12,149

Grenoble 0
Lille 2 (Cabaye 27, Kouassi 90) Att: 13,104

Lens 1 (Eduardo 49)
Lorient 1 (Sosa 42) Att: 32,741

Marseille 1 (Brandao 75)
Toulouse 1 (Sissoko 28) Att: 53,340

Saint-Etienne 0
Lyon 1 (Gomis 83) Att: 34,342

Sunday, November 1
Nice 1 (Gace 40)
Le Mans 0 Att: 8,993

Rennes 0
Valenciennes 3 (Balde 58, Ben Khalfallah 78, Pujol 86) Att: 21,675

Sochaux 1 (Dalmat 86)
Paris Saint-Germain 4 (Clement 35, Chantome 56, Erdinc 75, Luyindula 87) Att: 16,378

Shock...Osnabruck's Dennis Schmidt

GERMANY

More cup shocks

Third division club Osnabruck have done it again. Having already knocked high-flying Hamburg out of the German Cup, they added the scalp of Borussia Dortmund, winners in 1965 and 1989. Italian defender Angelo Barletta scored twice as the underdogs triumphed 3-2.

Stuttgart also crashed out to lower-league opposition, beaten 1-0 at second division Greuther Furth.

HUNGARY

Fradi dismiss boss

Ferencvaros relieved English coach Bobby Davison of his duties following a run of poor results that left them third from bottom. He has been replaced temporarily by his assistant Craig Short.

Gone...Davison

ISRAEL

Cohen is league's No1

Hapoel Ramat Gan goalkeeper Rafi Cohen, 38, set a new Israeli top-flight appearance record when he played his 525th game in a 3-2 defeat at home to Maccabi Ahi Nazareth.

Maccabi Haifa maintained their perfect league record with a 2-1 home victory over Beitar Jerusalem to move seven points clear at the top.

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bordeaux	11	8	1	2	20	7	25
Lyon	11	7	2	2	17	11	23
Monaco	11	7	0	4	16	11	21
Montpellier	11	6	2	3	18	15	20
Auxerre	11	6	2	3	12	10	20
Valenciennes	11	6	1	4	22	15	19
Marseille	10	5	3	2	17	10	18
Lorient	11	5	3	3	15	11	18
Nancy	11	5	2	4	17	16	17
PSG	10	4	4	2	17	11	16
Rennes	11	4	4	3	15	9	16
Toulouse	11	4	3	4	11	8	15
Sochaux	11	5	0	6	12	17	15
Nice	11	4	2	5	14	21	14
Lille	11	3	4	4	12	14	13
Saint-Etienne	11	3	1	7	9	15	10
Boulogne	11	2	3	6	9	17	9
Lens	11	2	3	6	9	19	9
Le Mans	11	2	2	7	10	17	8
Grenoble	11	0	0	11	5	23	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Nene (Monaco)
6 Youssouf Hadji (Nancy)
6 Mamadou Niang (Marseille)

GERMANY

Saturday, October 17
Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Limberopoulos 24, Meier 74)
Hannover 1 (Stajner 68) Att: 40,700

Freiburg 1 (Reisinger 90)
Bayern Munich 2 (Muller 42, Cha og 68) Att: 24,000

Hamburg 0
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 57,000

Koln 1 (Novakovic 42)
Mainz 0 Att: 49,000

Nurnberg 3 (Gygax 18, Bunjaku 26, 60)
Hertha Berlin 0 Att: 38,094

Stuttgart 1 (Cacau 73)
Schalke 2 (Rakitic 24, Kuranyi 76) Att: 42,000

Werder Bremen 2 (Pizarro 18, Mertesacker 22)
1899 Hoffenheim 0 Att: 33,916

Sunday, October 18
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Barrios 20, Subotic 51)
Bochum 0 Att: 72,500

Wolfsburg 2 (Madlung 45, Gentner 90)
Monchengladbach 1 (Bradley 90+) Att: 30,000

Friday, October 23
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Friedrich 65)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Barrios 8) Att: 30,210

Saturday, October 24
Bayern Munich 2 (Robben 69, Van Buyten 88)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Meier 60) Att: 69,000

Hannover 1 (Ya Konan 31)
Stuttgart 0 Att: 34,423

1899 Hoffenheim 3 (Eichner 34, Ibisevic 38, Zuculini 64)
Nurnberg 0 Att: 30,150

Mainz 3 (Ivanschitz 24, Hoogland 50, 85)
Freiburg 0 Att: 20,150

Monchengladbach 0
Koln 0 Att: 54,067

Sunday, October 25
Bochum 1 (Sestak 1)
Werder Bremen 4 (Hunt 9, Marin 31, Borowski 76, Ozil 90) Att: 25,703

Hertha Berlin 0
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 36,799

Schalke 3 (Kuranyi 50, 90, Schmitz 62)
Hamburg 3 (Berg 26, 80, Trochowski 45) Att: 61,673

Friday, October 30
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Sahin pen 60, Barrios 90)
Hertha Berlin 0 Att: 77,000

Saturday, October 31
Hamburg 2 (Trochowski 13, Ze Roberto 47)
Monchengladbach 3 (Reus 39, Dante 76, Friend 82) Att: 57,000

Koln 0
Hannover 1 (Rosenthal 37) Att: 45,000

Nurnberg 2 (Eigler 3, Bunjaku 33)
Werder Bremen 2 (Hunt 72, 90) Att: 42,258

Schalke 2 (Kuranyi 83, Sanchez 88)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Kroos 29, Kiessling 44) Att: 61,673

Stuttgart 0
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 42,000

Wolfsburg 3 (Martins 7, 20, Misimovic 64)
Mainz 3 (Amri 35, Ivanschitz 41, Hoogland 85) Att: 28,309

Sunday, November 1
Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Caio 14, Franz 53)
Bochum 1 (Franz og 25) Att: 37,500

Freiburg 0
1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Maicosuel 39) Att: 24,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B Leverkusen	11	6	5	0	21	8	23
Werder	11	6	4	1	22	9	22
Hamburg	11	6	4	1	25	14	22
Schalke	11	6	3	2	18	11	21
Hoffenheim	11	6	2	3	19	9	20
Bayern	11	5	4	2	17	9	19
Wolfsburg	11	5	3	3	21	19	18
Mainz	11	5	3	3	18	17	18
E Frankfurt	11	4	4	3	13	14	16
B Dortmund	11	4	4	3	12	14	16
Hannover	11	4	3	4	14	12	15
M'gladbach	11	3	2	6	13	20	11
Freiburg	11	3	1	7	14	23	10
Stuttgart	11	2	3	6	10	15	9
Koln	11	2	3	6	6	11	9
Nurnberg	11	2	3	6	9	17	9
Bochum	11	2	2	7	11	23	8
Hertha Berlin	11	1	1	9	7	25	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS
7 Stefan Kiessling (Bayer Leverkusen)
6 Andreas Ivanschitz (Mainz)
6 Kevin Kuranyi (Schalke)
6 Claudio Pizarro (Werder Bremen)

GREECE

Oct 17: Ergotelis 0 Aris 0; Olympiakos 3 Asteras 0; PAOK 2 Giannina 0.
Oct 18: Atromitos 3 Levadiakos 0; Larisa 2 Xanthi 0; Iraklis 0 Panionios 2; Kavala 2 Panathinaikos 2; AEK 3 Panthrakikos 2.
Oct 24: Asteras 1 Atromitos 2; Olympiakos 2 Ergotelis 1; Panionios 3 Giannina 1.
Oct 25: Levadiakos 1 Iraklis 0; Panthrakikos 1 Larisa 3; Aris 1 AEK 1; Panathinaikos 2 PAOK 1; Xanthi 2 Kavala 1.
Oct 31: Larisa 2 Aris 2; PAOK 1 Xanthi 0; Atromitos 0 Olympiakos 1.
Nov 1: Iraklis 1 Asteras 0; Kavala 3 Panthrakikos 0; Giannina 1 Levadiakos 1; Ergotelis 2 AEK 2; Panathinaikos 2 Panionios 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	9	8	1	0	18	5	25
Olympiakos	9	8	1	0	16	3	25
PAOK	9	4	3	2	10	5	15
Kavala	9	4	2	3	11	8	14
Aris	9	3	5	1	10	8	14
Ergotelis	9	3	4	2	15	12	13
AEK	9	3	3	3	10	10	12
Panionios	9	3	2	4	10	10	11
Asteras	9	3	2	4	10	13	11
Giannina	9	2	4	3	8	10	10
Larisa	9	2	4	3	10	13	10
Iraklis	9	3	1	5	7	10	10
Xanthi	9	3	1	5	5	8	10
Atromitos	9	2	2	5	9	10	8
Levadiakos	9	2	2	5	6	15	8
Panthrakikos	9	0	1	8	5	20	1

HOLLAND

Oct 17: Ajax 4 Willem II 0; NAC 4 Vitesse 0; Twente 3 AZ 2; PSV 1 Heerenveen 0.
Oct 18: VVV 1 Roda JC 1; RKC 0 Heracles 1; NEC 1 Den Haag 1; Groningen 0 Utrecht 0; Sparta 2 Feyenoord 1.
Oct 23: Utrecht 2 Roda JC 1.
Oct 24: Den Haag 2 Sparta 3; Feyenoord 1 VVV 0; Vitesse 0 Heracles 2; NAC 1 RKC 0.
Oct 25: Twente 4 Groningen 0; AZ 2 Ajax 4; Willem II 4 Heerenveen 1; NEC 0 PSV 4.
Oct 30: VVV 1 NAC 1.
Oct 31: Heerenveen 3 Den Haag 0; Roda JC 1 Twente 2; PSV 1 Vitesse 0; Groningen 0 AZ 1.
Nov 1: Ajax 5 Feyenoord 1; RKC 0 Willem II 1; Sparta 2 NEC 0; Heracles 3 Utrecht 1.

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Twente	12	10	2	0	26	10	32
PSV	12	9	3	0	28	10	30
Ajax	12	9	2	1	40	10	29
Feyenoord	12	7	2	3	20	13	23
Utrecht	12	6	4	2	14	10	22
Heracles	12	6	2	4	14	12	20
AZ	12	6	0	6	21	15	18
NAC	12	5	2	5	13	17	17
Sparta	12	5	2	5	11	15	17
Willem II	12	4	1	7	16	20	13
Den Haag	12	3	3	6	14	19	12
VVV	12	1	8	3	15	20	11
NEC	12	2	5	5	11	18	11
Vitesse	12	3	2	7	13	21	11
Heerenveen	12	3	2	7	9	17	11
Groningen	12	2	4	6	8	17	10
Roda JC	12	2	4	6	13	23	10
RKC	12	1	0	11	7	26	3

HUNGARY

Oct 16: Vasas 2 Debrecen 4; Zalaegerszeg 3 Papa 0.
Oct 17: Kaposvar 2 Ujpest 0; Nyiregyhaza 1 Diosgyor 1; Paks 2 Kecskemet 1; Szombathely 2 Honved 2.
Oct 18: MTK 2 Fehervar 2.
Oct 23: Honved 0 Zalaegerszeg 1.
Oct 24: Ujpest 3 MTK 2; Diosgyor 0 Paks 0; Papa 5 Nyiregyhaza 1; Szombathely 0 Vasas 1; Gyor 1 Kaposvar 1; Kecskemet 3 Ferencvaros 1.
Oct 25: Fehervar 3 Debrecen 0.
Oct 30: Debrecen 1 Ujpest 2.
Oct 31: MTK 0 Gyor 0; Kaposvar 2 Kecskemet 1; Zalaegerszeg 3 Szombathely 0; Nyiregyhaza 0 Honved 1; Paks 2 Papa 2.
Nov 1: Vasas 2 Fehervar 4.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fehervar	13	9	2	2	35	19	29
Ujpest	13	8	2	3	23	16	26
Gyor	12	6	4	2	17	9	22
Papa	13	7	1	5	23	16	22
Zalaegerszeg	12	6	2	4	18	18	20
MTK	12	5	4	3	19	14	19
Debrecen	10	6	1	3	19	15	19
Vasas	13	6	1	6	21	30	19
Kaposvar	13	4	4	5	17	19	16
Paks	13	4	4	5	13	17	16
Kecskemet	13	4	2	7	25	29	14
Honved	12	3	3	6	14	19	12
Szombathely	13	3	3	7	19	28	12
Ferencvaros	11	2	4	5	15	18	10
Nyiregyhaza	13	2	4	7	19	26	10
Diosgyor	12	2	3	7	14	18	9

ITALY

Saturday, October 17
Genoa 0
Inter 5 (Cambiasso 6, Balotelli 31, Stankovic 45, Vieira 66, Maicon 71) Att: 32,942

Juventus 1 (Amauri 19)
Fiorentina 1 (Vargas 5) Att: 25,779

Sunday, October 18
Catania 2 (Ricchiuti 37, Martinez 88)
Cagliari 1 (Dessena 45) Att: 11,247

Chievo 1 (Bogdani 82)
Bari 2 (Almiron 3, Ranocchia 65) Att: 9,268

Lazio 1 (Matuzalem 42)
Sampdoria 1 (Pazzini 40) Att: 33,103

Livorno 1 (Danilevicius 54)
Palermo 2 (Miccoli 56, Balzaretti 81) Att: 9,206

Milan 2 (Ronaldinho pen 56, Alexandre Pato 67)
Roma 1 (Menez 3) Att: 40,000

Napoli 2 (Quagliarella 72, Maggio 90)
Bologna 1 (Adailton 14) Att: 43,407

Parma 1 (Bozhinov 6)
Siena 0 Att: 15,126

Udinese 1 (Lodi 8)
Atalanta 3 (Tiribocchi 4, Valdes 70, De Ascentis 73) Att: 17,292

Saturday, October 24
Inter 2 (Muntari 13, Sneijder 31)
Catania 1 (Mascara pen 84) Att: 50,000

KAZAKHSTAN

Aktobe rule again

FC Aktobe won their fourth national title after beating Tobol 5-2. Lokomotiv finished runners-up, with Shakhter in third place.

LATVIA

Ventspils pay penalty

Liepajas Metalurgs won the Latvian championship for only the second time after drawing 1-1 with second-place FK Ventspils in the penultimate game of the season.

Andrejs Butriks' free-kick gave the reigning champions a 17th-minute lead, but Rudiger Abramczik's Metalurgs side made certain of the title with a penalty 12 minutes from time. Kristaps Grebis scored from the deciding goal following a handball by the visitors' Aleksandrs Solovjovs.

LITHUANIA

Ekranas retain title

FK Ekranas retained their league title on the final day of the season, winning 2-1 away to second place FK Vetra, thanks to two goals from striker Valdas Trakys.

"I have received more evidence that defending the title is twice as difficult as winning it," said Ekranas coach Valdas Urbonas.

Braga star...Cesar

PORTUGAL

Braga continue to upset the odds

Free-scoring Benfica, who had scored 30 in their previous eight games, were overtaken at the top of the table by Sporting Braga, who beat them 2-0 with goals from Hugo Viana and Paulo Cesar.

Braga's Andre Leone and Benfica's Oscar Cardozo were sent off at the end of the first

Sampdoria 4 (Pazzini 8, Mannini 17, 33, Ziegler 26)
Bologna 1 (Osvaldo 62) Att: 23,000

Sunday, October 25

Atalanta 3 (Valdes pen 43, Tiribocchi 52, Peluso 84)
Parma 1 (Paloschi 77) Att: 11,575

Bari 2 (Barreto 11, Meggiorini 69)
Lazio 0 Att: 20,675

Cagliari 3 (Biondini 55, Nene pen 78, Lazzari 87)
Genoa 2 (Mesto 20, Floccari 59) Att: 10,000

Chievo 1 (Pinzi 7)
Milan 2 (Nesta 81, 90) Att: 15,737

Fiorentina 0
Napoli 1 (Maggio 88) Att: 26,864

Palermo 1 (Bovo 87)
Udinese 0 Att: 20,834

Roma 0
Livorno 1 (Tavano 40) Att: 28,328

Siena 0
Juventus 1 (Amauri 72) Att: 15,367

Wednesday, October 28

Bologna 2 (Adailton 16, Osvaldo 59)
Siena 1 (Calaio 87) Att: 14,034

Catania 1 (Mascara pen 42)
Chievo 2 (Mantovani 32, Marcolini 70) Att: 12,347

Genoa 2 (Palladino 43, Mesto 73)
Fiorentina 1 (Marchionni 63) Att: 25,778

Juventus 5 (Amauri 26, 62, Chiellini 42, Camoranesi 50, Trezeguet 88)
Sampdoria 1 (Pazzini 63) Att: 25,273

Lazio 0
Cagliari 1 (Matri 50) Att: 30,000

Livorno 1 (Miglionico 68)
Atalanta 0 Att: 9,065

Napoli 2 (Cigarini 90, Denis 90+)
Milan 2 (Inzaghi 2, Alexandre Pato 5) Att: 55,709

Parma 2 (Bozhinov 57, Paloschi 66)
Bari 0 Att: 15,952

Udinese 2 (Floro Flores 21, 84)
Roma 1 (De Rossi 42) Att: 16,563

Thursday, October 29

Inter 5 (Eto'o pen 7, 43, Balotelli 34, 42, Milito 83)
Palermo 3 (Miccoli 49, 67, Hernandez 61) Att: 53,261

Saturday, October 31

Juventus 2 (Trezeguet 35, Giovinco 54)
Napoli 3 (Hamsik 59, 81, Datolo 64) Att: 22,899

Milan 2 (Borriello 12, 90)
Parma 0 Att: 45,000

Sunday, November 1

Cagliari 3 (Nene 33, 36, Matri pen 45)
Atalanta 0 Att: 10,000

Chievo 1 (Yepes 70)
Udinese 1 (Floro Flores 27) Att: 8,793

Fiorentina 3 (Marchionni 4, 69, Gilardino 86)
Catania 1 (Mascara 48) Att: 23,975

Livorno 0
Inter 2 (Milito 49, Maicon 80) Att: 15,736

Palermo 0
Genoa 0 Att: 25,624

Roma 2 (Vucinic 35, Perrotta 52)
Bologna 1 (Adailton 32) Att: 25,000

Sampdoria 0
Bari 0 Att: 26,180

Siena 1 (Maccarone 32)
Lazio 1 (Mauri 8) Att: 10,060

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter	11	9	1	1	28	9	28
Juventus	11	6	3	2	20	11	21
Sampdoria	11	6	3	2	18	13	21
Milan	11	5	4	2	12	11	19
Fiorentina	11	5	3	3	12	9	18
Napoli	11	5	2	4	17	18	17
Genoa	11	5	2	4	18	20	17
Parma	11	5	2	4	12	14	17
Cagliari	11	5	1	5	14	12	16
Palermo	11	4	4	3	15	14	16
Bari	11	3	6	2	10	7	15
Chievo	11	4	3	4	14	12	15
Udinese	11	4	3	4	15	15	15
Roma	11	4	2	5	18	19	14
Lazio	11	2	5	4	8	12	11
Atalanta	11	2	3	6	9	15	9
Bologna	11	2	3	6	10	17	9
Livorno	11	2	3	6	4	12	9
Catania	11	1	4	6	11	18	7
Siena	11	1	3	7	9	16	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS

9 Antonio Di Natale (Udinese)
7 Marek Hamsik (Napoli)
7 Diego Milito (Inter)
7 Giampaolo Pazzini (Sampdoria)

LITHUANIA

Oct 7: LKKA 0 Suduva 4.
Oct 18: Kruoja 1 Banga 2; Tauras 3 LKKA 0; Siauliai 0 Ekranas 3; Suduva 1 Vetra 1.
Oct 25: Kruoja 2 Vetra 2; LKKA 1 Siauliai 4; Tauras 1 Banga 0; Ekranas 4 Suduva 2.
Oct 31: Siauliai 3 Banga 0; Tauras 1 Kruoja 1; Suduva 4 LKKA 2; Vetra 1 Ekranas 2.

LITHUANIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ekranas	28	18	9	1	58	20	63
Vetra	28	16	9	3	55	22	57
Suduva	28	14	11	3	55	22	53
Siauliai	28	13	3	12	40	34	42
Tauras	28	10	8	10	26	22	38
Banga	28	7	6	15	25	49	27
LKKA	28	4	3	21	19	63	15
Kruoja (R)	28	2	7	19	24	70	13

Promoted: Silute

NORWAY

Oct 17: Molde 4 Stabaek 0.
Oct 18: Lyn 0 Stromsgodset 1; Start 0 Aalesund 1; Viking 0 Rosenborg 0; Sandefjord 2 Lillestrom 2; Bodo/Glimt 1 Tromso 1; Brann 1 Valerenga 2.
Oct 19: Fredrikstad 3 Odd Grenland 0.
Oct 25: Fredrikstad 1 Molde 2; Stabaek 2 Bodo/Glimt 0; Odd Grenland 4 Lyn 1; Lillestrom 3 Brann 1; Tromso 3 Start 1; Rosenborg 2 Aalesund 1; Valerenga 1 Sandefjord 2; Stromsgodset 2 Viking 1.
Nov 1: Lyn 0 Fredrikstad 5; Aalesund 1 Stromsgodset 1; Start 2 Valerenga 0; Viking 1 Tromso 0; Sandefjord 1 Stabaek 3; Bodo/Glimt 1 Odd Grenland 1; Molde 3 Lillestrom 0; Brann 1 Rosenborg 1.

Final standings – see page 85

POLAND

Oct 16: Belchatow 2 Slask 0; Ruch 1 Lechia 0.
Oct 17: Cracovia 1 Polonia Bytom 2; Piast 1 Legia 1; Polonia Warsaw 2 Odra 1; Korona 1 Arka 2.
Oct 18: Zaglebie 0 Jagiellonia 0; Lech 1 Wisla 0.
Oct 23: Arka 0 Jagiellonia 0; Polonia 0 Ruch 1.
Oct 24: Belchatow 3 Polonia Warsaw 0; Legia 5 Korona 2; Wisla 2 Piast 1; Slask 2 Zaglebie 0.
Oct 25: Odra 1 Cracovia 0; Lechia 0 Lech 0.
Oct 29: Zaglebie 2 Polonia Bytom 0.
Oct 30: Cracovia 0 Belchatow 1; Korona 2 Wisla 3; Piast 0 Lechia 2.
Oct 31: Arka 2 Odra 0; Lech 1 Slask 0; Legia 2 Ruch 0; Jagiellonia 1 Polonia Warsaw 0.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla	12	10	1	1	24	9	31
Ruch	12	8	1	3	14	7	25
Legia	12	7	3	2	18	6	24
Lech	12	6	3	3	19	13	21
Belchatow	12	6	3	3	14	10	21
Polonia B	12	6	2	4	15	10	20
Lechia	12	5	3	4	14	11	18
Piast	12	4	2	6	14	19	14
Arka	12	3	4	5	10	11	13
Slask	12	3	4	5	11	14	13
Korona	12	3	2	7	16	23	11
Jagiellonia*	12	5	5	2	13	7	10
Polonia W	12	3	1	8	10	21	10
Odra	12	3	0	9	8	16	9
Zaglebie	12	2	3	7	7	20	9
Cracovia	12	1	5	6	7	17	8

**10pts deducted for the club's involvement in a corruption scandal*

PORTUGAL

Oct 12: Belenenses 0 Nacional 1.
Oct 23: Belenenses 0 Olhanense 0.
Oct 24: Uniao Leiria 2 Naval 0; Rio Ave 1 Sporting Braga 1.
Oct 25: Maritimo 3 Pacos Ferreira 1; Setubal 1 Leixoes 0; Porto 3 Academica 2.
Oct 26: Benfica 6 Nacional 1.
Oct 27: Guimaraes 1 Sporting Lisbon 1.
Oct 30: Porto 1 Belenenses 1.
Oct 31: Naval 1 Leixoes 0; Sporting Braga 2 Benfica 0.
Nov 1: Pacos Ferreira 0 Uniao Leiria 1; Olhanense 0 Rio Ave 1; Nacional 2 Setubal 1; Sporting Lisbon 1 Maritimo 1.
Nov 2: Academica 2 Guimaraes 0.

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S Braga	9	8	1	0	15	4	25
Benfica	9	7	1	1	30	7	22
Porto	9	6	2	1	19	7	20
Rio Ave	9	3	5	1	9	6	14
Nacional	9	4	2	3	10	15	14
Uniao Leiria	9	3	4	2	13	8	13
Sporting L	9	3	4	2	10	8	13
Maritimo	9	3	3	3	13	11	12
Naval	9	3	1	5	7	14	10
Belenenses	9	1	5	3	5	10	8
Leixoes	9	2	2	5	7	15	8
Guimaraes	9	1	4	4	7	11	7
P Ferreira	9	1	4	4	6	11	7
Olhanense	9	1	4	4	5	10	7
Setubal	9	2	1	6	4	18	7
Academica	9	1	3	5	9	14	6

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bohemians	35	24	4	7	61	20	76
Shamrock	35	21	10	4	51	26	73
Cork	35	17	8	10	40	26	59
Derry	35	17	5	13	47	30	56
Dundalk	35	12	8	15	45	49	44
Galway	35	12	5	18	34	55	41
Sligo	35	10	10	15	38	50	40
St Patrick's	35	12	4	19	28	46	40
Drogheda	35	7	11	17	31	47	32
Bray	35	6	9	20	29	55	27

Standings on November 3

ROMANIA

Oct 16: Alba Iulia 1 International 2; Urziceni 1 Vaslui 2.
Oct 17: Pandurii 0 Gaz Metan 0; Rapid 1 CFR 4; Timisoara 6 Ceahlaul 0.
Oct 18: Gloria 2 Otelul 1; Astra 3 Universitatea 1; Brasov 0 Dinamo 1; Politehnica 0 Steaua 2.
Oct 23: Otelul 4 Politehnica 0; Gaz Metan 1 Brasov 1.
Oct 24: Ceahlaul 1 Alba Iulia 1; Universitatea 1 Vaslui 2; Pandurii 0 Urziceni 0.
Oct 25: International 2 Astra 1; Dinamo 1 Gloria 1; Steaua 1 Rapid 1; CFR 0 Timisoara 0.
Oct 31: Astra 1 Ceahlaul 1; Urziceni 3 Universitatea 2.
Nov 1: Alba Iulia 1 CFR 1; Vaslui 1 International 0; Rapid 3 Otelul 0; Politehnica 1 Dinamo 3; Timisoara 0 Steaua 1.
Nov 2: Gloria 1 Gaz Metan 1; Brasov 2 Pandurii 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rapid	12	7	1	4	27	16	22
CFR	12	6	4	2	17	8	22
Steaua	12	6	4	2	15	8	22
Vaslui	12	7	1	4	19	15	22
Timisoara	12	5	6	1	17	6	21
Dinamo	12	6	3	3	14	7	21
Urziceni	12	6	3	3	16	10	21
Brasov	12	5	5	2	14	7	20
Gaz Metan	12	4	4	4	13	15	16
Pandurii	12	4	3	5	10	13	15
International	12	5	0	7	11	22	15
Otelul	12	4	2	6	12	15	14
Politehnica	12	4	2	6	13	19	14
Astra	12	3	4	5	14	17	13
Universitatea	12	3	2	7	19	20	11
Alba Iulia	12	2	4	6	14	20	10
Ceahlaul	12	2	3	7	7	24	9
Gloria	12	1	5	6	9	19	8

New mark...Raul

half following a fracas in the players' tunnel.

Meanwhile, riot police fired warning shots into the air to keep angry fans at bay as Sporting Lisbon drew 1-1 at home to Martimo to stay seventh after their worst start to a season in 18 years.

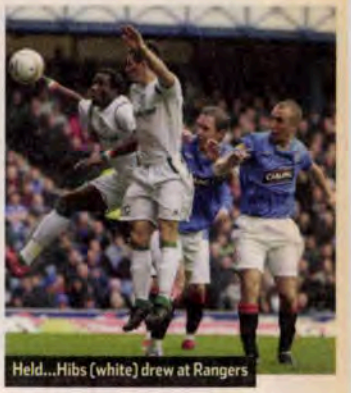
SCOTLAND
Celtic back on top

Rangers drew 1-1 at home to Hibernian in a top-of-the-table match at Ibrox which allowed Celtic to leapfrog their great Glasgow rivals with a 2-1 win at Hamilton.

SPAIN
First win for new boys

Xerez won for the first time in the top flight when they beat Villarreal 2-1. Robert Pires put the visitors ahead, but Xerez hit back through Mario Bermejo and Antonito.

711 new Real Madrid appearance record set by Raul in the 4-2 victory over Valladolid


Held...Hibs (white) drew at Rangers

RUSSIA

Oct 17: Spartak Nalchik 1 CSKA 1; Saturn 2 Amkar 0; Dynamo 0 Tom 1; Rubin 2 Khimki 1.
Oct 18: Terek 1 Rostov 3; Spartak Moscow 3 Lokomotiv 0; FC Moscow 2 Krylia Sovetov 1; Kuban 0 Zenit 2.
Oct 24: Krylia Sovetov 2 Terek 0; Khimki 0 Spartak Moscow 3; Lokomotiv 2 Saturn 2.
Oct 25: Amkar 0 Tom 0; CSKA 1 FC Moscow 3; Zenit 2 Spartak Nalchik 2; Kuban 1 Dynamo 1; Rostov 1 Rubin 2.
Oct 30: CSKA 1 Terek 0; Rubin 4 Krylia Sovetov 1; Saturn 1 Khimki 0.
Oct 31: FC Moscow 1 Zenit 0; Dynamo 0 Amkar 0.
Nov 1: Tom 1 Lokomotiv 3; Spartak Moscow 5 Rostov 1; Spartak Nalchik 4 Kuban 0.

RUSSIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rubin	27	17	5	5	57	21	56
Spartak M	27	17	4	6	57	26	55
FC Moscow	27	13	8	6	35	21	47
Zenit	27	13	8	6	44	26	47
CSKA	27	14	4	9	42	26	46
Lokomotiv	27	12	9	6	37	29	45
Saturn	27	11	6	10	33	36	39
Dynamo	27	10	6	11	25	32	36
Krylia Sovetov	27	9	6	12	28	35	33
Terek	27	9	6	12	31	41	33
Tom	27	8	8	11	23	36	32
Rostov	27	7	10	10	25	34	31
Spartak N	27	6	11	10	28	27	29
Amkar	27	7	8	12	24	35	29
Kuban	27	5	9	13	19	45	24
Khimki	27	2	4	21	18	56	10

SCOTLAND

Oct 17: St Johnstone 1 Rangers 2; Dundee United 1 Hamilton 1; Hibernian 1 Kilmarnock 0; Falkirk 1 St Mirren 3; Celtic 0 Motherwell 0; Aberdeen 1 Hearts 1.
Oct 24: Aberdeen 0 Dundee United 2; Hearts 0 Falkirk 0; Kilmarnock 2 St Johnstone 1; Rangers 1 Hibernian 1; St Mirren 3 Motherwell 3.
Oct 25: Hamilton 1 Celtic 2.
Oct 31: Celtic 3 Kilmarnock 0; Hibernian 2 Aberdeen 0; Motherwell 1 Hearts 0; St Johnstone 3 Falkirk 1; St Mirren 0 Hamilton 2.

SCOTLAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	10	7	2	1	20	8	23
Hibernian	10	6	2	2	16	8	20
Rangers	9	5	4	0	15	6	19
Motherwell	10	4	5	1	12	9	17
Dundee Utd	9	4	4	1	12	7	16
St Mirren	10	3	3	4	12	14	12
Aberdeen	10	2	5	3	7	9	11
Hearts	10	2	3	5	9	13	9
Kilmarnock	10	2	3	5	8	12	9
St Johnstone	10	2	3	5	16	21	9
Hamilton	10	2	2	6	8	17	8
Falkirk	10	0	4	6	5	16	4

SERBIA

Oct 17: BSK 0 Spartak 2; Mladi Radnik 0 Red Star 1; Javor 2 Metalac 0; Borac 3 Smederevo 1; Vojvodina 0 OFK 0.
Oct 18: Hajduk 3 Napredak 1; Cukaricki 2 Rad 1; Partizan 3 Jagodina 0.
Oct 24: Spartak 0 Vojvodina 1; Jagodina 2 BSK 0; Napredak 0 Cukaricki 2; Metalac 2 Hajduk 1; Smederevo 1 Javor 1; OFK 3 Mladi Radnik 0; Red Star 1 Borac 0.
Oct 25: Rad 2 Partizan 3.
Oct 31: Vojvodina 3 Mladi Radnik 0; Borac 2 OFK 0; Javor 0 Red Star 2; Cukaricki 0 Metalac 1; BSK 0 Rad 0; Spartak 1 Jagodina 1.
Nov 1: Partizan 3 Napredak 1; Hajduk 1 Smederevo 2.

SERBIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	10	9	1	0	18	2	28
Partizan	10	7	3	0	21	7	24
Vojvodina	10	6	2	2	16	4	20
OFK	10	5	2	3	11	7	17
Jagodina	10	4	2	4	11	11	14
Spartak	10	3	4	3	10	7	13
Javor	10	3	4	3	9	10	13
Borac	10	4	1	5	9	11	13
Smederevo	10	3	3	4	10	13	12
Metalac	10	4	0	6	6	13	12
Hajduk	10	2	4	4	10	13	10
Napredak	10	2	4	4	8	12	10
Mladi Radnik	10	2	4	4	5	12	10
Rad	10	1	5	4	9	13	8
BSK	10	2	2	6	6	15	8
Cukaricki	10	2	1	7	7	16	7

SLOVAKIA

SLOVAKIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zilina	15	10	2	3	18	7	32
Slovan	15	9	4	2	24	11	31
Dukla	15	7	6	2	21	11	27
Nitra	15	8	3	4	17	8	27
Senica	15	6	3	6	12	19	21
DAC	15	5	5	5	14	14	20
Spartak	15	5	3	7	19	19	18
Tatran	15	5	3	7	11	12	18
Ruzomberok	15	4	5	6	13	17	17
Petrzalka	15	4	4	7	17	17	16
Dubnica	15	3	4	8	10	22	13
Kosice	15	2	2	11	11	30	8

Standings on November 3

SLOVENIA

SLOVENIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Koper	16	10	5	1	25	15	35
Rudar	16	9	2	5	27	21	29
Olimpija*	16	8	1	7	23	16	23
Maribor	16	7	2	7	27	24	23
Celje	16	6	4	6	23	26	22
Domzale	16	5	5	6	22	28	20
Nafta	16	5	4	7	25	29	19
Interblock	16	5	3	8	20	22	18
Drava	16	4	5	7	18	23	17
Gorica	16	3	5	8	22	28	14

Standings on November 3
**2pts deducted for missing a game during last season's second level campaign*

SPAIN

Saturday, October 17

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Juan Rodriguez 38)
Sevilla 0 Att: 22,000

Real Madrid 4 (Raul 14, 18, Marcelo 45, Higuain 79)
Valladolid 2 (Nauzet 29, Marquitos 53) Att: 52,000

Valencia 0
Barcelona 0 Att: 50,000

Sunday, October 18

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Toquero 81)
Sporting Gijon 2 (De las Cuevas 65, 77) Att: 36,000

Espanyol 2 (Ivan Alonso 11, 60)
Tenerife 1 (Alfaro 15) Att: 29,100

Malaga 1 (Edinho 68)
Almeria 2 (Cisma 40, Soriano 41) Att: 21,000

Mallorca 3 (Julio Alvarez 31, Aduriz 53, 70)
Getafe 1 (Albin 79) Att: 16,000

Osasuna 3 (Pandiani 4, 27, Aranda 30)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 15,000

Xerez 2 (Mario Bermejo 42, Antonito 80)
Villarreal 1 (Pires 18) Att: 16,374

Zaragoza 2 (Pavon 22, Arizmendi 33)
Racing Santander 2 (Tchite 81, Oscar Serrano 86) Att: 24,000

Saturday, October 24

Atletico Madrid 1 (Forlan pen 52)
Mallorca 1 (Borja Valero 90) Att: 45,000

Sevilla 0
Espanyol 0 Att: 50,000

Sporting Gijon 0
Real Madrid 0 Att: 23,000

Sunday, October 25

Almeria 0
Valencia 3 (Villa 54, Pablo Hernandez 74, Mata 87) Att: 12,171

Barcelona 6 (Keita 24, 41, 86, Ibrahimovic 29, 56, Messi 80)
Zaragoza 1 (Jorge Lopez 78) Att: 75,653

Getafe 2 (Soldado 60, Parejo pen 71)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 12,000

Racing Santander 1 (Arana 90)
Osasuna 1 (Pandiani 51) Att: 16,154

Tenerife 1 (Alfaro 74)
Xerez 0 Att: 15,500

Valladolid 4 (Nauzet 19, 46, Diego Costa 76, Medunjanin 88)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 17,479

Villarreal 2 (Nilmar 27, Capdevila 54)
Malaga 1 (Luque 45) Att: 16,000

Saturday, October 31

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Javi Martinez 19)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 39,000

Osasuna 1 (Pique og 90)
Barcelona 1 (Keita 72) Att: 18,891

Real Madrid 2 (Higuain 53, 56)
Getafe 0 Att: 79,000

Xerez 0
Sevilla 2 (Negredo 42, Luis Fabiano 89) Att: 18,522

Sunday, November 1

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Nouioui 41)
Sporting Gijon 1 (Diego Castro 69) Att: 25,000

Espanyol 1 (Luis Garcia 51)
Valladolid 1 (Medunjanin 90) Att: 27,130

Malaga 0
Valencia 1 (David Navarro 69) Att: 30,000

Mallorca 1 (Webo 18)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 12,600

Villarreal 5 (Llorente 16, 52, Pires 47, Rossi 51, Cani 88)
Tenerife 0 Att: 18,000

Zaragoza 2 (Lafita 30, Pulido 36)
Almeria 1 (Ortiz 39) Att: 24,000

SPAIN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	9	7	2	0	24	5	23
Real Madrid	9	7	1	1	23	6	22
Sevilla	9	6	1	2	16	5	19
Valencia	9	5	3	1	16	9	18
Mallorca	9	5	2	2	16	9	17
Dep Coruna	9	5	1	3	12	11	16
Sporting Gijon	9	3	4	2	11	10	13
Espanyol	9	3	4	2	8	9	13
Ath Bilbao	9	4	1	4	9	13	13
Osasuna	9	3	3	3	11	10	12
Getafe	9	4	0	5	12	14	12
Zaragoza	9	3	2	4	13	18	11
Villarreal	9	2	3	4	12	11	9
Valladolid	9	2	3	4	14	17	9
Almeria	9	2	3	4	8	12	9
Tenerife	9	3	0	6	5	17	9
R Santander	9	1	4	4	10	17	7
At Madrid	9	1	4	4	10	19	7
Xerez	9	1	2	6	3	16	5
Malaga	9	1	1	7	8	13	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS

7 Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Barcelona)
7 David Villa (Valencia)
6 Seydou Keita (Barcelona)
6 Lionel Messi (Barcelona)
6 Walter Pandiani (Osasuna)

SWEDEN

Oct 17: Trelleborgs 0 Elfsborg 1; AIK 1 Gefle 0; Kalmar 2 GAIS 2.
Oct 18: Brommapojkarna 3 Orebro 0; Orgryte 3 Helsingborgs 0.
Oct 19: Halmstads 1 Hammarby 0; Malmo 0 IFK 1; Hacken 2 Djurgardens 1.
Oct 23: Orebro 2 Halmstads 1; GAIS 1 Malmo 1; Brommapojkarna 0 IFK 3.
Oct 24: Djurgardens 2 Orgryte 1; Helsingborgs 1 Kalmar 1.
Oct 25: Hammarby 1 AIK 2; Elfsborg 1 Hacken 1; Gefle 2 Trelleborgs 1.
Oct 26: GAIS 0 Brommapojkarna 1.
Oct 27: IFK 2 Halmstads 2; Kalmar 5 Malmo 4.
Oct 28: AIK 1 Orebro 1; Orgryte 1 Elfsborg 1; Hacken 0 Gefle 0; Helsingborgs 0 Djurgardens 2; Trelleborgs 4 Hammarby 2.
Nov 1: Halmstads 1 GAIS 3; IFK 1 AIK 2; Orebro 1 Trelleborgs 1; Malmo 1 Brommapojkarna 1; Djurgardens 2 Kalmar 0; Elfsborg 1 Helsingborgs 0; Hammarby 0 Hacken 1; Gefle 2 Orgryte 2.

Final standings – see page 86

SWITZERLAND

Oct 24: Aarau 1 Bellinzona 2; Grasshopper 2 Young Boys 1.
Oct 25: St Gallen 1 Zurich 3; Sion 1 Xamax 0; Lucerne 4 Basle 5.
Oct 28: St Gallen 1 Grasshopper 0; Aarau 0 Sion 0; Zurich 2 Basle 2.
Oct 29: Xamax 1 Lucerne 1; Bellinzona 1 Young Boys 7.
Oct 31: Zurich 1 Sion 1; Basle 3 Grasshopper 1.

Double delight...Alex

TURKEY

Fener see off Gala to stay top of the pile

Fenerbahce beat their big Istanbul rivals Galatasaray 3-1 to extend their lead at the top of the league.

Alex struck twice for the hosts – the second from the penalty spot – before Hakan Balta halved the deficit for the visitors. However, any hopes of a Gala comeback were dashed by the 75th-minute dismissal of Abdul Kader Keita, followed by Daniel Guiza adding a third for the hosts in added time.

Galatasaray, who haven't tasted victory at Fenerbahce since 1999, remain in second place and saw the gap at the top of the table reduced to three points the following weekend when the league leaders were held to a 1-1 draw at Kayserispor.

Nine men...Botafogo

PARAGUAY

Three off in semi-final

Ten-man Cerro Porteno beat nine-man Botafogo 2-1 in an ill-tempered Sudamericana Cup quarter-final first leg in Asuncion.

Carlos Recalde's opener was cancelled out by the Brazilian's Reinaldo, before Botafogo's Leo Silva and Emerson were dismissed.

Roberto Nanni scored the

Nov 1: Bellinzona 0 St Gallen 5; Xamax 3 Aarau 3; Young Boys 1 Lucerne 1.

SWITZERLAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Young Boys	15	11	2	2	39	17	35
Basle	15	8	4	3	34	22	28
Xamax	15	7	5	3	33	19	26
Lucerne	15	6	4	5	25	25	22
Zurich	15	5	5	5	29	27	20
Sion	15	5	5	5	23	26	20
St Gallen	15	5	4	6	22	23	19
Grasshopper	15	5	2	8	22	24	17
Bellinzona	15	3	3	9	20	40	12
Aarau	15	1	4	10	11	35	7

TURKEY

Oct 17: Denizlispor 2 Bursaspor 3; Besiktas 2 Kasimpasa 1.
Oct 18: Genclerbirligi 2 Sivasspor 0; Istanbul BB 1 Manisaspor 0; Kayserispor 3 Ankaragucu 0; Gaziantepspor 2 Fenerbahce 1; Ankaraspor 0 Eskisehirspor 3 (awarded); Antalyaspor 4 Diyarbakirspor 1; Galatasaray 4 Trabzonspor 3.
Oct 23: Trabzonspor 2 Kayserispor 1.
Oct 24: Bursaspor 6 Istanbul BB 0; Eskisehirspor 0 Besiktas 1.
Oct 25: Diyarbakirspor 1 Genclerbirligi 0; Kasimpasa 3 Denizlispor 1; Manisaspor 1 Antalyaspor 2; Sivasspor 3 Gaziantepspor 0; Ankaragucu 3 Ankaraspor 0 (awarded); Fenerbahce 3 Galatasaray 1.
Oct 31: Antalyaspor 1 Bursaspor 1; Besiktas 1 Ankaragucu 0.
Nov 1: Denizlispor 0 Istanbul BB 1; Gaziantepspor 2 Diyarbakirspor 1; Genclerbirligi 0 Manisaspor 2; Kasimpasa 1 Eskisehirspor 1; Galatasaray 2 Sivasspor 0; Ankaraspor 0 Trabzonspor 3 (awarded); Kayserispor 1 Fenerbahce 1.

TURKEY	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	11	9	1	1	22	7	28
Galatasaray	11	8	1	2	28	15	25
Bursaspor	11	7	2	2	25	10	23
Besiktas	11	6	3	2	11	6	21
Kayserispor	11	5	4	2	15	8	19
Trabzonspor	11	5	3	3	23	14	18
Istanbul BB	11	5	3	3	13	18	18
Eskisehirspor	11	4	5	2	15	11	17
Genclerbirligi	11	4	4	3	15	11	16
Antalyaspor	11	5	1	5	16	14	16
Gaziantepspor	11	4	3	4	14	15	15
Manisaspor	11	3	4	4	10	10	13
Ankaragucu	11	3	3	5	15	14	12
Diyarbakirspor	11	3	3	5	11	19	12
Kasimpasa	11	2	2	7	11	19	8
Sivasspor	11	2	1	8	9	19	7
Denizlispor	11	1	3	7	9	19	6
Ankaraspor*	11	0	0	11	0	33	0

**Ankaraspor expelled from league for having "anti-competitive" links with Ankaragucu; all fixtures awarded as 3-0 wins to their opponents*

UKRAINE

Oct 17: Chornomorets 2 Zakarpattya 0; Kryvbas 4 Zorya 0; Vorskla 1 Metalurh Donetsk 2; Metalurh Zaporizhya 1 Dnipro 3; Dynamo 2 Obolon 1.
Oct 18: Illichivets 0 Metalist 2; Shakhtar 5 Karpaty 1; Tavriya 2 Arsenal 2.
Oct 24: Arsenal 2 Kryvbas 1; Metalurh Donetsk 2 Chornomorets 0; Obolon 1 Tavriya 0; Dnipro 0 Dynamo 2; Karpaty 3 Metalurh Zaporizhya 3.
Oct 25: Zorya 3 Illichivets 2; Zakarpattya 1 Shakhtar 1; Metalist 1 Vorskla 0.
Oct 31: Vorskla 2 Zorya 0; Dynamo 1 Karpaty 1.
Nov 1: Chornomorets 0 Shakhtar 1; Kryvbas 3 Obolon 2; Tavriya 2 Dnipro 1; Illichivets 1 Arsenal 2; Metalurh Zaporizhya 3 Zakarpattya 0; Metalurh Donetsk 0 Metalist 1.

UKRAINE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	12	10	2	0	31	7	32
Shakhtar	12	8	4	0	31	10	28
Metalist	12	8	2	2	14	5	26
Metalurh D	12	6	3	3	20	13	21
Dnipro	12	6	3	3	16	9	21
Tavriya	12	5	5	2	14	14	20
Karpaty	12	4	5	3	20	17	17
Arsenal	12	4	4	4	18	16	16
Metalurh Z	12	4	2	6	17	21	14
Illichivets	12	4	2	6	14	19	14
Vorskla	12	2	6	4	10	10	12
Obolon	12	4	0	8	10	24	12
Zorya	12	3	2	7	9	22	11
Chornomorets	12	2	2	8	8	20	8
Kryvbas	12	2	1	9	13	22	7
Zakarpattya	12	2	1	9	6	22	7

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Quarter-finals, 1st legs

Oct 20
Velez Sarsfield (Arg) 1 (Lopez 5)
LDU Quito (Ecu) 1 (Bieler 52)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** De Oliveira (Bra)

Oct 21
Cerro Porteno (Par) 2 (Recalde 33, Nanni pen 79)
Botafogo (Bra) 1 (Reinaldo 57)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,644. **Ref:** Pezzotta (Arg)
Sent off: Leo Silva 59min, Emerson 79min (both Botafogo); Recalde (Cerro Porteno) 90min

Oct 21
River Plate (Uru) 0
San Lorenzo (Arg) 1 (Pintos 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)
Sent off: Torres (San Lorenzo) 54min

Oct 22
Fluminense (Bra) 2 (O Gonzalez og 15, Fred 46)
Universidad de Chile (Chl) 2 (Montillo 50, Olivera 56)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Wednesday, October 7
Banfield 1 (Silva pen 75)
Atletico Tucuman 1 (Rodriguez 29)

Godoy Cruz 1 (Torres 47)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Formica 18)

Tigre 2 (Luna 72, Arruabarrena 85)
Huracan 2 (Trecarichi 13, Diaz 22)

Thursday, October 8
Colon 4 (Ramirez 21, Rivarola 46, Bertoglio 64, Bauman 67)
Arsenal 1 (Perez 49)

Racing Club 1 (Caballero 33)
Boca Juniors 2 (Viatri 46, 60)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Moralez 40)
Argentinos Juniors 0

Friday, October 9
Chacarita Juniors 0
San Lorenzo 2 (Rivero 19, Gomez 49)

Estudiantes 1 (Carrusca 23)
Lanus 1 (Quintana 82)

Rosario Central 1 (Gomez 77)
Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Castro 10)

Monday, October 12
River Plate 1 (Gallardo pen 90)
Independiente 3 (Gandin 11, Piatti 29, Silvera 33)

Friday, October 16
Lanus 1 (Velazquez 17)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Somoza 82)

San Lorenzo 1 (Romeo 43)
Rosario Central 0

Saturday, October 17
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Scotti 12, Raymonda 36)
Racing Club 0

Arsenal 1 (Marcone 60)
Banfield 1 (Fernandez 76)

Atletico Tucuman 1 (Rodriguez pen 45)
Godoy Cruz 1 (Vera 56)

Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Vizcarra 88)
Colon 2 (Maldonado og 38, Garce pen 77)

Sunday, October 18
Boca Juniors 2 (Gaitan 50, 59)
Tigre 1 (Luna 79)

Huracan 0
River Plate 0

Independiente 1 (Galeano 29)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Alustiza 58)

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Boghossian 28, Schiavi 78)
Estudiantes 1 (Benitez 30)

Friday, October 23
Estudiantes 1 (Boselli pen 31)
Atletico Tucuman 0

Rosario Central 2 (Broun pen 32, Zelaya 50)
Independiente 0

Saturday, October 24
Banfield 3 (Silva 14, 32, Rodriguez 44)
Godoy Cruz 0

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Echeverria 65)
Huracan 0

Racing Club 1 (Yacob 60)
Lanus 1 (Salvio 8)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Cristaldo 31)
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Boghossian 49, 70)

Sunday, October 25
Arsenal 1 (Galvan 84)
Gimnasia La Plata 0

Colon 2 (Nieto 5, 48)
San Lorenzo 1 (Goux og 75)

River Plate 1 (Gallardo 29)
Boca Juniors 1 (Palermo 63)

Tigre 1 (Morel 55)
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Ortigoza pen 6)

Tuesday, October 27
Atletico Tucuman 1 (Paez 39)
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Zarate 28, Moralez pen 90)

Godoy Cruz 1 (Chavez 74)
Estudiantes 2 (Curbelo og 78, Desabato 83)

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Insaurralde 69)
Racing Club 0

Wednesday, October 28
Gimnasia La Plata 0
Banfield 1 (Silva 67)

Huracan 1 (Dominguez 5)
Rosario Central 0

Independiente 3 (Silvera 13, Piatti 44, 72)
Colon 2 (Nieto 34, Ramirez 89)

San Lorenzo 3 (Rivero 15, Rovira 69, Gomez 86)
Arsenal 2 (Jara 5, Tula 51)

Thursday, October 29
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Ortigoza pen 90)
River Plate 2 (Buonanotte 30, Rosales 79)

Boca Juniors 3 (Insua 17, Gaitan 41, Battaglia 54)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Lanus 4 (Salvio 18, Aguirre 22, Blanco 62, Biglieri 81)
Tigre 0

Saturday, October 31
Gimnasia La Plata 2 (Vizcarra 22, Maldonado 90)
San Lorenzo 2 (Menseguez pen 42, Pintos 48)

Racing Club 4 (Luguercio 6, Caballero 13, Desvaux og 35, Aveldano 71)
Atletico Tucuman 0

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Cubero 13, Somoza 57)
Godoy Cruz 0

Sunday, November 1
Arsenal 1 (Jara 48)
Independiente 0

Chacarita Juniors 2 (Grabinski 32, Parra 68)
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Pavlovich 60, Bogado 90)

River Plate 0
Lanus 1 (Velazquez 32)

Rosario Central 2 (Mendez 4, Castillejos 74)
Boca Juniors 1 (Krupoviesa 36)

Monday, November 2
Banfield 2 (Silva 11, Erviti 68)
Estudiantes 1 (Veron 38)

Tigre 1 (Boghossian og 69)
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Formica 67, Boghossian 86)

Crunch...River (left) v Boca

winner from the penalty spot nine minutes from time, with Recalde becoming the third player to be dismissed when he was shown a red card in stoppage time.

ARGENTINA

Superclasico draw

Martin Palermo scored a second-half equaliser for visitors Boca Juniors as they snatched a 1-1 draw against River Plate in the *superclasico* at the Monumental.

Marcelo Gallardo had put River ahead in a game that saw the hosts' left-back Cristian Villagra and Boca defender Julio Cesar Caceres both sent off.

On the same day, San Lorenzo had Renato Civelli dismissed against Colon – for punching team-mate Pablo Pintos during an argument in the tunnel.

CHILE

Seven-goal thriller

Universidad Catolica suffered their first defeat of the closing season when they went down 4-3 at Union Espanola.

Although never in the lead, Universidad did recover from being 3-1 down – and having their goalkeeper sent off – to level at 3-3, but a Gustavo Canales goal five minutes from time won the game for Union.

Union hero...Canales

ARGENTINA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Banfield	12	7	5	0	16	6	26
Newell's	12	8	2	2	17	8	26
Velez	12	7	3	2	18	10	24
Estudiantes	12	7	2	3	21	12	23
San Lorenzo	12	6	5	1	20	13	23
Colon	11	6	3	2	20	10	21
Argentinos Jrs	12	5	5	2	17	12	20
Independiente	12	6	2	4	20	16	20
Rosario	12	6	2	4	11	8	20
Boca Juniors	12	5	3	4	20	18	18
Lanus	12	4	5	3	15	12	17
Arsenal	12	5	2	5	11	15	17
Gimnasia LP	12	2	4	6	11	16	10
River Plate	12	2	4	6	12	18	10
Godoy Cruz	12	2	4	6	12	20	10
Huracan	11	2	3	6	9	16	9
At Tucuman	12	2	3	7	13	23	9
Racing Club	12	1	5	6	10	14	8
Chacarita Jrs	12	2	2	8	10	21	8
Tigre	12	1	2	9	13	28	5

LEADING GOALSCORER
11 Santiago Silva (Banfield)

BOLIVIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Final, 1st leg

Oct 18
Blooming 1 (Vieira pen 22)
Bolivar 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mancilla
Sent off: Hoyos (Bolivar) 72min

Final, 2nd leg

Oct 21
Bolivar 1 (Da Silva 35)
Blooming 1 (Suarez 21)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Jordan
Blooming take championship 1 win to 0

BRAZIL

Oct 7: Sport Recife 0 Santos 1; Barueri 0 Santo Andre 0; Atletico Paranaense 0 Gremio 0; Sao Paulo 2 Coritiba 2; Fluminense 1 Corinthians 1; Vitoria 3 Flamengo 3; Internacional 3 Nautico 1.
Oct 8: Botafogo 3 Atletico Mineiro 1; Palmeiras 2 Avai 2; Cruzeiro 3 Goias 0.
Oct 10: Santo Andre 1 Fluminense 2; Corinthians 2 Gremio 1; Flamengo 2 Sao Paulo 1; Internacional 1 Atletico Paranaense 1; Coritiba 1 Barueri 2.
Oct 12: Santos 0 Vitoria 0; Goias 1 Sport Recife 1; Nautico 3 Palmeiras 0; Atletico Mineiro 0 Cruzeiro 1; Botafogo 2 Avai 2.
Oct 17: Sao Paulo 0 Atletico Mineiro 1; Barueri 0 Santos 0; Avai 2 Goias 1.
Oct 18: Sport Recife 2 Corinthians 0; Gremio 2 Coritiba 0; Palmeiras 0 Flamengo 2; Fluminense 2 Internacional 2; Atletico Paranaense 3 Santo Andre 0; Cruzeiro 1 Botafogo 0; Vitoria 3 Nautico 1.
Oct 21: Santo Andre 2 Palmeiras 0.
Oct 24: At Mineiro 1 Vitoria 0; Nautico 2 Barueri 1.
Oct 25: Santos 3 Sao Paulo 4; Goias 2 Fluminense 2; Internacional 1 Gremio 0; Coritiba 3 Atletico Paranaense 2; Botafogo 0 Flamengo 1; Corinthians 0 Cruzeiro 1; Avai 2 Sport Recife 2.
Oct 28: Atletico Paranaense 1 Santos 1; Botafogo 1 Nautico 0; Cruzeiro 3 Santo Andre 2; Gremio 3 Avai 1; Barueri 2 Flamengo 0; Sao Paulo 1 Internacional 0; Vitoria 0 Corinthians 1.
Oct 29: Palmeiras 4 Goias 0; Fluminense 2 Atletico Mineiro 1; Sport Recife 1 Coritiba 1.
Oct 31: Avai 2 Atletico Paranaense 0; Flamengo 1 Santos 0; Sao Paulo 1 Barueri 0.
Nov 1: Palmeiras 2 Corinthians 2; Internacional 0 Botafogo 1; Goias 2 Atletico Mineiro 3; Coritiba 1 Vitoria 0; Nautico 3 Sport Recife 2; Cruzeiro 2 Fluminense 3; Santo Andre 2 Gremio 0.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palmeiras	33	16	10	7	52	37	58
Sao Paulo	33	16	10	7	46	34	58
At Mineiro	33	16	8	9	52	44	56
Flamengo	33	15	9	9	49	42	54
Internacional	33	15	7	11	54	40	52
Cruzeiro	33	15	6	12	47	47	51
Gremio	33	13	8	12	58	40	47
Goias	33	13	8	12	55	58	47
Avai	33	12	11	10	52	45	47
Corinthians	33	12	10	11	42	46	46
Vitoria	33	12	8	13	47	47	44
Barueri	33	11	11	11	52	45	44
Santos	33	10	12	11	47	50	42
Coritiba	33	11	8	14	44	48	41
At Paranaense	33	11	7	15	36	46	40
Botafogo	33	8	14	11	45	50	38
Santo Andre	33	9	8	16	35	47	35
Nautico	33	9	8	16	41	58	35
Fluminense	33	7	12	14	38	54	33
Sport Recife	33	7	9	17	43	57	30

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
League stage

Oct 9: Union Espanola 3 Rangers 3.
Oct 11: Univ de Chile 1 Cobresal 1.
Oct 12: Curico Unido 1 Santiago Morning 1.
Oct 16: Santiago Morning 1 Dep La Serena 2.
Oct 17: Union Espanola 4 Univ Catolica 3; O'Higgins 2 Municipal 2.
Oct 18: Curico Unido 3 Nublense 0; Cobresal 2 Everton 0; Rangers 1 Palestino 0; Cobreloa 0 Audax Italiano 1; Huachipato 0 Colo Colo 2; Univ de Chile 1 Univ de Concepcion 1.
Oct 23: Audax Italiano 1 Rangers 0.
Oct 24: Palestino 0 Everton 1; Univ de Concepcion 1 Union Espanola 2; Colo Colo 2 Cobreloa 1; Municipal 1 Cobresal 1.
Oct 25: Dep La Serena 3 Univ de Chile 0; Curico Unido 0 O'Higgins 1; Nublense 3 Huachipato 0; Univ Catolica 3 Santiago Morning 0.
Oct 30: O'Higgins 1 Dep La Serena 3.
Oct 31: Cobresal 0 Colo Colo 2; Palestino 1 Huachipato 3; Univ de Chile 2 Univ Catolica 3; Municipal 2 Cobreloa 1.
Nov 1: Everton 1 Audax Italiano 2; Univ de Concepcion 1 Nublense 1; Rangers 3 Santiago Morning 1; Union Espanola 3 Curico Unido 0.

CHILE – CLOSING – LEAGUE STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Univ Catolica	16	10	5	1	39	12	35
Audax Italiano	16	9	4	3	26	22	31
Dep La Serena	16	10	0	6	29	18	30
Colo Colo	16	8	4	4	27	17	28
U Concepcion	16	8	3	5	22	19	27
S Morning	16	8	1	7	21	24	25
U Espanola	16	7	3	6	29	29	24
Rangers	16	7	3	6	26	26	24
Everton	16	7	3	6	17	18	24
Univ de Chile	16	5	6	5	23	23	21
Cobresal	16	5	4	7	18	17	19
Curico Unido	16	4	7	5	14	23	19
O'Higgins	16	4	6	6	16	22	18
Nublense	16	5	3	8	14	20	18
Palestino	16	4	5	7	14	19	17
Cobreloa	16	5	1	10	20	22	16
Huachipato	16	4	2	10	19	29	14
Municipal	16	1	6	9	20	34	9

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Regular season

Oct 16: Dep Pasto 1 At Huila 1.
Oct 17: Millonarios 1 Indep Santa Fe 1; Quindio 1 Indep Medellin 2.
Oct 18: America 1 La Equidad 1; At Junior 1 Pereira 1; Tolima 1 Envigado 0; Cucuta 2 Chico 0; Once Caldas 2 Dep Cali 1; At Nacional 0 Cartagena 0.
Oct 21: La Equidad 1 At Junior 0; Envigado 3 Millonarios 4; At Huila 2 America 2; Pereira 4 Quindio 0; Indep Medellin 1 Tolima 3; Indep Santa Fe 1 Cucuta 1; Chico 2 At Nacional 1; Cartagena 3 Once Caldas 1; Dep Cali 3 Dep Pasto 0.
Oct 24: Tolima 1 Pereira 1; Millonarios 3 Indep Medellin 0; Once Caldas 2 Chico 2.
Oct 25: Dep Cali 2 At Huila 2; Dep Pasto 1 Cartagena 0; Cucuta 1 Envigado 0; Quindio 2 La Equidad 2; At Junior 3 America 0; At Nacional 1 Indep Santa Fe 2.
Oct 31: Envigado 1 At Nacional 2.
Nov 1: America 1 Quindio 2; At Huila 2 At Junior 1; La Equidad 0 Tolima 2; Pereira 1 Millonarios 0; Independiente 2 Cucuta 1; Chico 1 Dep Pasto 0; Cartagena 2 Dep Cali 1; Indep Santa Fe 2 Once Caldas 1.

COLOMBIA – CLOSING – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ind Medellin	16	12	0	4	27	16	36
At Huila	16	8	5	3	24	20	29
Dep Pasto	16	7	5	4	21	18	26
Tolima	16	7	5	4	22	21	26
Pereira	16	6	7	3	20	9	25
At Nacional	16	6	7	3	21	19	25
At Junior	16	7	3	6	33	23	24
Ind Santa Fe	16	6	6	4	26	23	24
Millonarios	16	5	7	4	21	19	22
Chico	16	5	6	5	26	27	21
Cartagena	16	5	6	5	23	24	21
Dep Cali	16	5	4	7	25	26	19
Cucuta	16	4	5	7	15	15	17
Quindio	16	5	2	9	21	31	17
La Equidad	16	2	10	4	16	21	16
Once Caldas	16	4	3	9	18	30	15
America	16	1	9	6	19	26	12
Envigado	16	1	6	9	26	36	9

ECUADOR

3rd stage

Oct 16: LDU Quito 4 Manta 0.
Oct 18: Macara 0 Dep Quito 1; Emelec 0 Dep Cuenca 1; Olmedo 0 Espoli 0.
Oct 23: Dep Cuenca 2 Olmedo 1.
Oct 25: Dep Quito 0 LDU Quito 0; Espoli 0 Emelec 0; Manta 0 Macara 2.
Oct 30: Dep Cuenca 1 Espoli 0.
Oct 31: Macara 0 LDU Quito 0.
Nov 1: Dep Quito 4 Manta 0; Olmedo 2 Emelec 0.

ECUADOR – 3RD STAGE – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Quito	3	2	1	0	5	0	8 [1]
LDU Quito	3	1	2	0	4	0	8 [3]
Macara	3	1	1	1	2	1	5 [1]
Manta	3	0	0	3	0	10	0

ECUADOR – 3RD STAGE – GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cuenca	3	3	0	0	4	1	9
Olmedo	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Emelec	3	0	1	2	0	3	4 [3]
Espoli	3	0	2	1	0	1	2

Figure in brackets shows bonus points from 1st and 2nd stages

PARAGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 7: Cerro Porteno 1 Nacional 1.
Oct 17: Rubio Nu 1 Libertad 1; Nacional 0 Guarani 0; Tacuary 2 Cerro Porteno 1.
Oct 18: 3 de Febrero 3 2 de Mayo 3; 12 de Octubre 0 Sportivo Luqueno 2; Sol de America 0 Olimpia 2.
Oct 24: Libertad 3 12 de Octubre 0; 2 de Mayo 2 Nacional 1; Guarani 2 Tacuary 0.
Oct 25: Sportivo Luqueno 1 3 de Febrero 0; Cerro Porteno 0 Sol de America 1; Olimpia 2 Rubio Nu 2.
Oct 31: Tacuary 1 2 de Mayo 1; Rubio Nu 1 Cerro Porteno 1.
Nov 1: 3 de Febrero 0 Nacional 2; Sol de America 3 Guarani 1; Sportivo Luqueno 0 Libertad 2; 12 de Octubre 1 Olimpia 0.

PARAGUAY – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	15	9	4	2	24	11	31
Nacional	15	9	4	2	20	8	31
Guarani	15	7	5	3	14	9	26
Olimpia	15	8	1	6	22	14	25
Rubio Nu	15	6	7	2	18	14	25
Tacuary	15	5	3	7	16	24	18
Sol America	15	5	2	8	17	19	17
2 de Mayo	15	4	4	7	16	16	16
Cerro Porteno	15	3	7	5	12	15	16
3 de Febrero	15	4	4	7	15	23	16
S Luqueno	15	4	4	7	13	21	16
12 de Octubre	15	3	1	11	9	22	10

PERU

Group stage

Oct 17: Sport Ancash 0 Colegio Nacional 0; Inti Gas 2 Cesar Vallejo 1; Melgar 1 Total Chalaco 1.
Oct 18: Juan Aurich 0 Sporting Cristal 0; Huancayo 1 Universitario 0; Al Lima 1 Jose Galvez 1; Univ SMP 5 Cienciano 0; Coronel Bolognesi 2 Al Atletico 0.
Oct 21: Alianza Atletico 1 Total Chalaco 2.
Oct 24: Sporting Cristal 4 Sport Ancash 0; Universitario 3 Melgar 1; Colegio Nacional 1 Juan Aurich 0; Jose Galvez 0 Inti Gas 3.
Oct 25: Cienciano 2 Coronel Bolognesi 0; Alianza Atletico 2 Universidad SMP 1; Cesar Vallejo 2 Alianza Lima 2; Total Chalaco 5 Huancayo 1.
Oct 31: Jose Galvez 1 Sport Ancash 0; Inti Gas 2 Sporting Cristal 0; Alianza Lima 2 Colegio Nacional 1; Coronel Bolognesi 0 Universitario 1; Universidad SMP 1 Total Chalaco 0; Cesar Vallejo 0 Juan Aurich 0.
Nov 1: Cienciano 1 Melgar 4; Alianza Atletico 2 Huancayo 1.

PERU – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alianza Lima	38	19	9	10	51	39	66
Juan Aurich	38	16	14	8	52	39	62
Inti Gas	38	15	10	13	51	41	55
Cesar Vallejo	38	14	13	11	48	45	55
S Cristal	38	15	9	14	66	44	54
Jose Galvez	38	14	7	17	36	47	49
Colegio	38	11	7	20	30	51	40
Sport Ancash	38	10	8	20	34	58	38

PERU – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Universitario	38	19	12	7	45	26	69
Huancayo	38	18	7	13	57	45	61
Univ SMP*	38	15	15	8	60	41	59
Melgar	38	13	12	13	48	53	51
Cienciano	38	12	14	12	48	55	50
Total Chalaco	38	12	12	14	57	50	48
Al Atletico	38	9	11	18	34	50	38
C Bolognesi	38	6	12	20	33	66	30

*1pt deducted

In form...Cruz Azul (right)

MEXICO
Primera strength
Mexican clubs won every CONCACAF Champions League group to further prove that the Primera Division is the region's strongest league.

Cruz Azul were the only team to complete the group stage undefeated following their 2-1 win against Saprissa in Costa Rica. The quarter-final first legs will be played from March 9 to 11, with the returns on March 16 to 18.

USA
Crew are on board
Columbus Crew booked a place in next year's CONCACAF Champions League after winning the MLS Supporters' Shield for the best regular-season record in MLS. They join US Open Cup winners Seattle in the group stage.

Season's best...Columbus Crew

ANGOLA
Petro triumph
Petro Luanda clinched the league title with a game to spare, beating ASA 2-1 to win their 15th championship.

IVORY COAST
ASEC win again
ASEC Mimosas won their 23rd league title following a 0-0 draw with struggling EFYM.

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP
Oct 17: River Plate 1 Atenas 0; Liverpool 3 Rampla Juniors 1; Wanderers 4 Nacional 0; Tacuarembo 3 Central Espanol 1.
Oct 18: Defensor 1 Cerrito 0; Cerro 3 Fenix 2; Racing 1 Danubio 2; Cerro Largo 1 Penarol 2.
Oct 21: Racing 0 Wanderers 4; Nacional 5 Atenas 0; Rampla Juniors 2 Fenix 1.
Oct 22: Liverpool 7 Tacuarembo 1; Cerrito 2 Danubio 2; Defensor 0 Cerro Largo 0; Central Espanol 2 Penarol 3.
Oct 27: Danubio 0 Atenas 1; Penarol 3 Rampla Juniors 0; Tacuarembo 0 Defensor 1.
Oct 28: Wanderers 3 Cerro 1; Cerro Largo 1 Racing 3; Fenix 0 Cerrito 0; River Plate 1 Liverpool 4; Nacional 5 Central Espanol 1.
Oct 31: Cerrito 1 River Plate 1; Penarol 1 Defensor 1.
Nov 1: Fenix 0 Tacuarembo 2; Danubio 2 Wanderers 3; Central Espanol 0 Liverpool 0; Nacional 2 Cerro 0; Atenas 0 Racing 5; Rampla Juniors 0 Cerro Largo 3.

URUGUAY – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	10	6	3	1	25	11	21
Nacional*	10	8	0	2	22	9	21
Wanderers	10	6	2	2	19	8	20
Defensor	10	6	2	2	17	9	20
Penarol	10	5	4	1	18	11	19
Danubio	10	5	2	3	20	15	17
Racing	10	4	3	3	17	13	15
River Plate	9	3	5	1	14	12	14
Cerrito	10	3	4	3	13	11	13
Rampla Jrs	10	3	3	4	8	15	12
Tacuarembo	10	3	0	7	9	16	9
Cerro Largo	10	2	2	6	9	13	8
Cerro	9	2	2	5	10	17	8
C Espanol	10	1	4	5	10	21	7
Atenas	10	2	1	7	4	21	7
Fenix	10	0	3	7	5	18	3

3pts deducted

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP
Oct 17: Centro Italo 1 Caracas 3.
Oct 18: Carabobo 2 Zulia 1; Llaneros 2 Aragua 0; Yaracuyanos 0 Tachira 2; Esppor 0 Zamora 1; Italia 1 Mineros 1; Trujillanos 3 El Vigia 1; Monagas 1 Lara 0; Estudiantes 0 Anzoategui 0.
Oct 21: Lara 2 Trujillanos 2; Tachira 2 Anzoategui 0.
Oct 24: Mineros 2 Zamora 1.
Oct 25: El Vigia 2 Anzoategui 0; Lara 2 Zulia 1; Caracas 2 Yaracuyanos 0; Monagas 5 Italia 3; Trujillanos 2 Esppor 1; Llaneros 1 Carabobo 1; Centro Italo 0 Estudiantes 0; Aragua 0 Tachira 0.
Oct 28: Zulia 0 Mineros 0.
Nov 1: Tachira 2 El Vigia 1; Anzoategui 1 Lara 0; Zamora 4 Monagas 3; Yaracuyanos 1 Aragua 0; Italia 2 Trujillanos 1; Esppor 2 Llaneros 1; Carabobo 2 Centro Italo 2; Estudiantes 1 Caracas 2.

VENEZUELA – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caracas	10	8	2	0	25	6	26
Italia	11	7	2	2	15	10	23
Tachira	10	6	3	1	16	4	21
Trujillanos	11	6	2	3	21	13	20
Monagas	11	6	2	3	26	21	20
Lara	11	5	3	3	16	10	18
Mineros	11	4	3	4	15	13	15
Esppor	11	4	3	4	10	13	15
Anzoategui	10	4	2	4	12	13	14
Zamora	10	4	2	4	12	19	14
El Vigia	11	4	1	6	17	22	13
Yaracuyanos	11	4	1	6	12	19	13
Aragua	11	3	3	5	7	14	12
Zulia	11	3	2	6	15	18	11
Estudiantes	11	1	6	4	10	10	9
Carabobo	11	1	5	5	7	16	8
Centro Italo	11	1	4	6	13	19	7
Llaneros	11	1	4	6	10	19	7

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A
Oct 21: Metapan (ElS) 3 Houston Dynamo (USA) 2; Pachuca (Mex) 2 Arabe Unido (Pan) 0.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pachuca	6	5	0	1	15	4	15
Arabe Unido	6	3	1	2	13	9	10
Houston	6	2	1	3	9	8	7
Metapan	6	1	0	5	3	19	3

Group B
Oct 20: Toluca (Mex) 1 DC United (USA) 1.
Oct 22: San Juan Jabloteh (T&T) 2 Marathon (Hnd) 4.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	6	4	1	1	15	4	13
Marathon	6	4	0	2	12	14	12
DC United	6	3	1	2	12	8	10
San Juan	6	0	0	6	4	17	0

Group C
Oct 20: Puerto Rico Islanders (PR) 1 Columbus Crew (USA) 1; Saprissa (CR) 1 Cruz Azul (Mex) 2.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP C – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruz Azul	6	5	1	0	16	4	16
Columbus	6	2	2	2	5	9	8
Saprissa	6	1	2	3	6	8	5
Puerto Rico Is	6	0	3	3	6	12	3

Group D
Oct 21: W Connection (T&T) 3 Real Espana (Hnd) 2.
Oct 22: Comunicaciones (Gtm) 2 Pumas UNAM (Mex) 1.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP D – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pumas UNAM	6	4	1	1	15	6	13
Com'caciones	6	3	0	3	6	8	9
W Connection	6	2	1	3	10	9	7
Real Espana	6	2	0	4	6	14	6

Top two in each group qualified for the quarter-finals, the draw for which is on November 17

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP
Group stage
Oct 10: Tecos 1 Guadalajara 2.
Oct 11: San Luis 2 Atlante 1.
Oct 17: Cruz Azul 3 Tecos 1; Monterrey 1 Jaguares 2; Indios 0 Atlante 2; Morelia 2 Pachuca 0; Toluca 1 Tigres 1; San Luis 1 Pumas 0; Atlas 0 Queretaro 1.
Oct 18: America 0 Puebla 0.
Oct 19: Santos 1 Guadalajara 0.
Oct 23: Tecos 2 Toluca 1.
Oct 24: Queretaro 2 Cruz Azul 1; Jaguares 1 Santos 1; Tigres 1 San Luis 0; Pachuca 1 Indios 0; Atlante 2 Atlas 0.
Oct 25: Pumas 2 Monterrey 1; Puebla 2 Morelia 1; America 1 Guadalajara 0.
Oct 31: Indios 0 Puebla 2; Tigres 2 Tecos 2; Atlas 1 Pachuca 1; San Luis 0 Monterrey 3; Cruz Azul 3 Atlante 1.
Nov 1: Toluca 2 Queretaro 0; Morelia 3 Guadalajara 1; America 1 Jaguares 1; Santos 1 Pumas 1.

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	14	9	2	3	25	16	29
San Luis	14	4	5	5	16	17	17
Guadalajara	14	4	3	7	17	25	15
Atlas	14	4	3	7	10	18	15
Queretaro	14	3	3	8	12	27	12
Indios	14	0	4	10	4	22	4

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morelia	14	9	1	4	28	13	28
America	14	7	5	2	25	12	26
Monterrey	14	8	2	4	24	13	26
Puebla	14	5	8	1	18	13	23
Pachuca	14	7	2	5	22	22	23
Jaguares	14	4	4	6	13	17	16

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 3	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	14	7	5	2	25	17	26
Cruz Azul	14	8	0	6	27	18	24
Atlante	14	6	1	7	15	17	19
Tigres	14	4	6	4	18	16	18
Tecos	14	4	3	7	20	28	15
Pumas	14	3	3	8	12	20	12

UNITED STATES

Regular season
Oct 7: San Jose 1 Dallas 2.
Oct 10: Toronto 1 San Jose 1; New England 0 Columbus 1; Chivas 2 Kansas City 0.
Oct 14: Salt Lake 2 New York 0.
Oct 17: Toronto 1 Salt Lake 0; New England 0 Chicago 0; DC United 1 Columbus 0; Dallas 2 Colorado 1; Kansas City 2 Seattle 3; Chivas 2 San Jose 2.
Oct 18: Houston 0 Los Angeles 0.
Oct 22: Chicago 1 Chivas 0.
Oct 24: New York 5 Toronto 0; Kansas City 2 DC United 2; Salt Lake 3 Colorado 0; Seattle 2 Dallas 1; Los Angeles 2 San Jose 0.
Oct 25: Chivas 2 Houston 3; Columbus 0 New England 1.

USA – EASTERN CONFERENCE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Columbus	30	13	10	7	41	31	49
Chicago	30	11	12	7	39	34	45
New England	30	11	9	10	33	37	42
DC United	30	9	13	8	43	44	40
Toronto	30	10	9	11	37	46	39
Kansas City	30	8	9	13	33	42	33
New York	30	5	6	19	27	47	21

USA – WESTERN CONFERENCE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Los Angeles	30	12	12	6	36	31	48
Houston	30	13	9	8	39	29	48
Seattle	30	12	11	7	38	29	47
Chivas	30	13	6	11	34	31	45
Salt Lake	30	11	7	12	43	35	40
Colorado	30	10	10	10	42	38	40
Dallas	30	11	6	13	50	47	39
San Jose	30	7	9	14	36	50	30

The conference winners and runners-up, plus the four other teams with the best regular season record, qualified for quarter-finals

Quarter-finals
1st legs - Oct 29-Nov 1
Chivas 2 Los Angeles 2
New England 2 Chicago 1
Salt Lake 1 Columbus 0
Seattle 0 Houston 0

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals, 2nd legs
Oct 10
Kano Pillars (Nig) 0
Heartland (Nig) 1 (Agba 90)
HT: 0-0
Heartland 5-0 on agg

Oct 18
TP Mazembe (DRC) 0
Al Hilal (Sud) 2 (Sadomba 26, 33)
HT: 0-2
TP Mazembe 5-4 on agg

CONFEDERATION CUP

Semi-finals, 2nd legs
Oct 16
ES Setif (Alg) 1 (Ziaya 10)
Bayelsa United (Nig) 0
HT: 1-0
ES Setif 2-1 on agg

Oct 18
Stade Malien (Mli) 4 (Coulibaly 33, 86, Bagayoko 37, 72)
ENPPI (Egy) 2 (Hassan 8, Zaoui 60)
HT: 2-1
Stade Malien 6-4 on agg

EGYPT

EGYPT	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ahly	8	6	2	0	15	6	20
Petrojet	8	5	2	1	16	9	17
Jaish	8	4	2	2	16	12	14
Ismaili	8	3	4	1	11	9	13
Zamalek	8	3	2	3	11	10	11
Gouna	8	2	4	2	9	10	10
ENPPI	6	3	1	2	8	9	10
Entag Harby	7	2	3	2	10	8	9
Haras Hedood	7	2	3	2	11	12	9
Shorta	8	2	3	3	9	10	9
Masry	8	2	3	3	10	12	9
Mokawloon	8	1	5	2	9	10	8
Mansoura	8	1	4	3	8	9	7
Mehalla	7	1	3	3	3	9	6
Ittihad	8	1	2	5	5	11	5
Assyut	7	0	3	4	4	9	3

Standings on November 3

Champions...Guoan

CHINA
Guoan top at last
Beijing Guoan won their first-ever league title with a hat-trick from Emil Martinez as they beat Hangzhou Lucheng 4-0.

Runners-up in 2007 and third last year, they were so concerned at missing out again that they had sacked South Korean coach Lee Jan-soo with seven games to go.

THAILAND
Muang Thong success
Muang Thong United won the Thai Premier League for the first time in their short history. They will now compete in the play-offs for next year's Asian Champions League.

Thai Port beat BEC Tero Sasana 5-4 on penalties after they drew 1-1 in the Final of the Thai FA Cup to secure their place in next year's AFC Cup.

UZBEKISTAN
Scolari's champions
Bunyodkor, led by Brazil's World Cup-winning coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, retained their league title with five games to play when Ivan Nagaev's last-minute goal meant Metalourg Bekabad held second-place Pakhtakor Tashkent to a 1-1 draw. Aleksandr Geynrikh had given the visitors thew lead.

More success...Scolari

SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SuperSport	13	7	5	1	25	11	26
Santos	13	6	5	2	15	8	23
Ajax	13	6	4	3	11	10	22
Celtic	13	5	6	2	18	14	21
Pirates	13	5	5	3	10	7	20
Sundowns	13	5	4	4	21	15	19
Wits	13	4	7	2	21	16	19
Chiefs	13	5	3	5	14	11	18
Swallows	13	5	2	6	11	14	17
Arrows	13	2	9	2	11	12	15
Maritzburg	13	3	6	4	13	18	15
F S Stars	13	1	9	3	12	13	12
Platinum Stars	13	3	3	7	7	11	12
AmaZulu	13	3	3	7	11	19	12
Aces	13	3	3	7	8	17	12
Cosmos	13	1	6	6	12	24	9

Standings on November 3

TUNISIA

TUNISIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance T	9	8	0	1	27	6	24
Club Africain	9	6	2	1	7	1	20
Sfaxien	9	5	2	2	14	8	17
Stade Tunisien	9	5	2	2	11	7	17
Etoile Sahel	9	5	1	3	17	9	16
Bizertin	9	4	4	1	12	8	16
Kairouanaise	9	4	0	5	5	8	12
Monastir	9	2	4	3	11	10	10
Gafsa	9	2	4	3	8	13	10
Olympique	9	2	2	5	5	12	8
Kasserine	9	2	2	5	7	18	8
Ham-Sousse	9	2	1	6	9	16	7
Esperance Z	9	2	1	6	6	16	7
Ham-Lif	9	1	1	7	10	17	4

Standings on November 3

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals, 1st legs
Oct 21
Al Ittihad (Sau) 6 (Hadid 25, Noor 66, 76, 90, Leguizamon pen 84, Chermiti 90+)
Nagoya Grampus (Jap) 2 (Kennedy 14, Nakamura 32)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 18,265. **Ref:** Albadwawi (UAE)
Sent off: Takeuchi (Nagoya) 6min

Oct 21
Pohang Steelers (SKo) 2 (Hwang Jae-won 45, Kim Jae-sung 79)
Umm Salal (Qat) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,635. **Ref:** Al Hilali (Oma)

Semi-finals, 2nd legs
Oct 28
Nagoya Grampus 1 (Sugimoto 67)
Al Ittihad 2 (Al Saqri 41, Chermiti 59)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 11,046. **Ref:** Moradi (Irn)
Al Ittihad 8-3 on agg

Oct 28
Umm Salal 1 (Nadiya 90)
Pohang Steelers 2 (Ristic 55, No Byung-jin 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,200. **Ref:** Abdul Bashir (Sin)
Pohang Steelers 4-1 on agg

AFC CUP

Semi-finals
1st legs - Oct 15; 2nd legs - Oct 21
Binh Duong (Vie) v Al Karama (Syr)
2-1, 0-3 (agg 2-4)
Kuwait SC (Kuw) v South China (HK)
2-1, 1-0 (agg 3-1)

AUSTRALIA

Regular season
Oct 9: Perth 1 Adelaide 0; Melbourne 0 Sydney 3.
Oct 11: Central Coast 1 North Queensland 1; Brisbane 0 Gold Coast 1.
Oct 16: Adelaide 2 Sydney 1.
Oct 17: Brisbane 0 Central Coast 3; North Queensland 1 Wellington 1.
Oct 18: Newcastle 1 Melbourne 3; Gold Coast 2 Perth 1.
Oct 23: Newcastle 2 Central Coast 1.
Oct 24: Melbourne 3 Adelaide 1; North Queensland 2 Perth 1.
Oct 25: Wellington 6 Gold Coast 0; Sydney 2 Brisbane 1.
Oct 30: Brisbane 1 Newcastle 1.
Oct 31: Central Coast 0 Adelaide 0; Gold Coast 0 North Queensland 2.
Nov 1: Perth 2 Melbourne 1; Sydney 3 Wellington 1.

AUSTRALIA – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sydney	13	8	1	4	19	11	25
Melbourne	13	7	3	3	22	18	24
Gold Coast	13	6	2	5	19	20	20
Central Coast	13	4	5	4	13	8	17
Perth	13	5	2	6	18	17	17
Adelaide	13	4	4	5	12	15	16
N Queensland	13	3	6	4	15	20	15
Wellington	12	2	7	3	16	14	13
Brisbane	13	3	4	6	16	21	13
Newcastle	12	3	4	5	12	18	13

CHINA

Oct 10: Guangzhou 1 Changchun 1; Hangzhou 1 Shaanxi 0; Chongqing 1 Shandong 1; Henan 2 Beijing 2.
Oct 11: Dalian 0 Shanghai 1; Jiangsu 0 Shenzhen 3; Tianjin 3 Qingdao 2; Changsha 0 Chengdu 1.
Oct 14: Tianjin 0 Beijing 0; Chongqing 0 Shenzhen 1.
Oct 17: Chengdu 1 Jiangsu 0; Changsha 1 Shandong 1; Shaanxi 1 Chongqing 2; Shanghai 1 Hangzhou 1; Changchun 2 Dalian 0; Beijing 2 Guangzhou 0; Henan 3 Qingdao 1; Shenzhen 1 Tianjin 1.
Oct 21: Changsha 2 Chongqing 1.
Oct 24: Chengdu 0 Shenzhen 3; Jiangsu 0 Shandong 2; Changsha 0 Shaanxi 0; Chongqing 1 Shanghai 1; Hangzhou 1 Changchun 3; Dalian 1 Beijing 2; Guangzhou 0 Qingdao 0; Henan 2 Tianjin 1.
Oct 31: Shenzhen 3 Henan 1; Tianjin 2 Guangzhou 1; Qingdao 3 Dalian 1; Beijing 4 Hangzhou 0; Changchun 3 Chongqing 2; Shanghai 2 Changsha 1; Shaanxi 2 Jiangsu 2; Shandong 0 Chengdu 1.

CHINA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Beijing	30	13	12	5	48	28	51
Changchun	30	14	8	8	38	31	50
Henan	30	13	9	8	35	26	48
Shandong	30	11	12	7	35	30	45
Shanghai	30	12	9	9	39	29	45
Tianjin	30	12	9	9	36	29	45
Chengdu	30	11	6	13	32	39	39
Dalian	30	10	8	12	27	31	38
Guangzhou	30	9	10	11	38	38	37
Jiangsu	30	9	10	11	30	30	37
Shenzhen*	30	10	10	10	36	40	37
Shaanxi	30	9	10	11	26	24	37
Qingdao	30	8	12	10	36	36	36
Changsha	30	6	15	9	23	31	33
Hangzhou (R)	30	8	8	14	30	43	32
Chongqing (R)	30	7	8	15	27	51	29

**3pts deducted for kit rule violation*

IRAN

IRAN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sepahan	15	8	4	3	24	12	28
Esteghlal T	15	7	6	2	20	10	27
Zob-Ahan	15	7	6	2	25	16	27
Peykan	15	6	7	2	18	11	25
Steel Azin	15	6	6	3	23	21	24
Moghavemat	15	5	8	2	21	15	23
Persepolis	15	5	8	2	24	19	23
Esteghlal A	15	5	6	4	23	23	21
Malavan	15	5	6	4	15	21	21
Saba	15	6	2	7	23	22	20
Teraktor Sazi	15	5	5	5	19	19	20
Mes	15	5	4	6	25	26	19
Saipa	15	4	5	6	19	25	17
Shahin	15	3	6	6	21	24	15
Rah-Ahan	15	3	6	6	17	21	15
Foolad	15	1	7	7	9	17	10
Pas	15	2	4	9	13	23	10
AbooMoslem	15	0	8	7	11	25	8

Standings on November 3

JAPAN

Oct 7: Kashima 2 Kawasaki 3.
Oct 17: Tokyo 4 Kashiwa 0; Sanfrecce 2 Gamba 2; Montedio 1 Vissel 0; Omiya 2 Kawasaki 3; Albirex 0 Urawa 1; Yokohama 2 Nagoya 1; Jubilo 0 Kashima 0.
Oct 18: Oita 2 Shimizu 1; JEF 1 Kyoto 1.
Oct 24: Kashima 3 JEF 0; Gamba 0 Yokohama 0; Vissel 1 Albirex 0; Kashiwa 0 Montedio 1; Kyoto 1 Oita 1.
Oct 25: Nagoya 3 Jubilo 3; Urawa 0 Omiya 3; Shimizu 1 Tokyo 2; Kawasaki 7 Sanfrecce 0.

JAPAN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kawasaki	30	16	7	7	57	35	55
Kashima	30	16	6	8	42	29	54
Gamba	30	15	6	9	53	38	51
Shimizu	30	13	11	6	44	32	50
Tokyo	30	15	4	11	44	35	49
Albirex	30	12	10	8	39	28	46
Sanfrecce	30	12	10	8	47	43	46
Urawa	30	14	4	12	39	39	46
Nagoya	30	12	6	12	43	42	42
Yokohama	30	10	11	9	38	33	41
Jubilo	30	11	7	12	47	53	40
Kyoto	30	10	8	12	32	38	38
Montedio	30	10	7	13	32	36	37
Vissel	30	10	7	13	37	43	37
Omiya	30	9	9	12	38	44	36
Kashiwa	30	5	12	13	32	53	27
JEF	30	4	12	14	28	48	24
Oita	30	5	5	20	20	43	20

SOUTH KOREA

Regular season
Oct 7: Pohang 3 Seoul 2.
Oct 11: Gangwon 1 Chonbuk 3; Incheon 2 Daejeon 1; Suwon 1 Ulsan 0; Gyeongnam 3 Daegu 0; Busan 3 Jeju 0; Gwangju 2 Songnam 3; Chunnam 1 Pohang 0.
Oct 17: Ulsan 0 Gyeongnam 1; Pohang 1 Gangwon 0; Seoul 2 Busan 2; Chunnam 2 Daejeon 0.
Oct 18: Jeju 0 Incheon 2; Chonbuk 2 Gwangju 0; Songnam 3 Suwon 2.
Oct 24: Gangwon 1 Daejeon 2; Suwon 1 Chonbuk 1; Gwangju 2 Pohang 3.
Oct 25: Daegu 0 Ulsan 1; Gyeongnam 4 Songnam 1; Incheon 0 Seoul 1; Chunnam 0 Jeju 0.
Nov 1: Busan 0 Incheon 1; Seoul 1 Chunnam 1; Jeju 0 Gangwon 1; Chonbuk 4 Gyeongnam 2; Pohang 1 Suwon 0; Daejeon 3 Gwangju 1; Songnam 3 Daegu 0.

SOUTH KOREA – REGULAR – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chonbuk	28	17	6	5	59	33	57
Pohang	28	14	11	3	55	33	53
Seoul	28	16	5	7	47	27	53
Songnam	28	13	6	9	40	34	45
Incheon	28	11	10	7	31	29	43
Chunnam	28	11	9	8	41	39	42
Gyeongnam	28	10	10	8	38	32	40
Ulsan	28	9	9	10	32	29	36
Daejeon	28	8	9	11	29	38	33
Suwon	28	8	8	12	29	32	32
Gwangju	28	9	3	16	33	40	30
Busan	28	7	8	13	36	42	29
Gangwon	28	7	7	14	42	57	28
Jeju	28	7	7	14	22	44	28
Daegu	28	5	8	15	20	45	23

Top six qualified for championship play-offs

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

Not long to wait...the World Cup

December 2
Sudamericana Cup Final 2nd leg
December 4
Draw for World Cup finals
December 8/9
Last round of Champions League group games
December 9
Start of Club World Cup
December 19
Club World Cup Final

GERMANY BUNDESLIGA

SQUADS 2009-10

BAYER LEVERKUSEN

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Rene ADLER	15.01.85
21	Tomasz BOBEL (Pol)	29.12.74
22	Benedikt FERNANDEZ	08.01.85
36	Fabian GIEFER	17.05.90
DEFENDERS		
27	Gonzalo CASTRO	11.06.87
5	Manuel FRIEDRICH	13.09.79
4	Sami HYYPIA (Fin)	07.10.73
24	Michal KADLEC (Cze)	13.12.84
3	Stefan REINARTZ	01.01.89
15	Hans SARPEI (Gha)	28.06.76
2	Daniel SCHWAAB	23.08.88
20	Lukas SINKIEWICZ	09.10.85
26	Assimiou TOURE (Tog)	01.01.88
MIDFIELDERS		
10	Renato AUGUSTO (Bra)	08.02.88
7	Tranquillo BARNETTA (Swi)	22.05.85
8	Lars BENDER	27.04.89
33	Pierre DE WIT	26.09.87
37	Kevin KAMPL	09.10.90
28	Burak KAPLAN (Tur)	01.02.90
39	Toni KROOS	04.01.90
6	Simon ROLFES	21.01.82
23	Arturo VIDAL (Chi)	22.05.87
18	Tomasz ZDEBEL	25.05.73
FORWARDS		
19	Eren DERDIYOK (Swi)	12.06.88
29	Theofanis GEKAS (Gre)	23.05.80
9	Patrick HELMES	01.03.84
11	Stefan KIESSLING	25.01.84
17	Richard SUKUTA-PASU	24.06.90
COACH		
Jupp HEYNCKES		09.05.45

BAYERN MUNICH

GOALKEEPERS		
22	Hans-Jorg BUTT	28.05.74
35	Thomas KRAFT	22.07.88
1	Michael RENSING	14.05.84
DEFENDERS		
4	Edson BRAAFHEID (Hol)	08.04.83
15	BRENO (Bra)	13.10.89
6	Martin DEMICHELIS (Arg)	20.12.80
21	Philipp LAHM	11.11.83
30	Christian LELL	29.08.84
5	Daniel VAN BUYTEN (Bel)	07.02.78
MIDFIELDERS		
8	Hamit ALTINTOP (Tur)	08.12.82
28	Holger BADSTUBER	13.03.89
19	Alexander BAUMJOHANN	23.01.87
13	Andreas GORLITZ	31.01.82
16	Andreas OTTL	01.03.85
23	Danijel PRANJIC (Cro)	02.12.81
7	Franck RIBERY (Fra)	01.04.83
31	Bastian SCHWEINSTEIGER	01.08.84
20	Jose SOSA (Arg)	19.06.85
44	Anatoliy TYMOSHCHUK (Ukr)	30.03.79
17	Mark VAN BOMMEL (Hol)	22.04.77
FORWARDS		
33	Mario GOMEZ	10.07.85
18	Miroslav KLOSE	09.06.78
25	Thomas MULLER	13.09.89
11	Ivica OLIC (Cro)	14.09.79
10	Arjen ROBBEN (Hol)	23.01.84
9	Luca TONI (Ita)	26.05.77
COACH		
Louis VAN GAAL (Hol)		08.08.51

BOCHUM

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Daniel FERNANDES (Por)	25.09.83
18	Philipp HEERWAGEN	13.04.83
26	Andreas LUTHE	10.03.87
31	Rene RENNO	19.02.79
DEFENDERS		
24	Phillip BONIG	20.03.80
2	Matias CONCHA (Swe)	31.03.80
30	Patrick FABIAN	11.10.87
6	Christian FUCHS (Aut)	07.04.86
4	Marcel MALTRITZ	02.10.78
20	Mergim MAVRAJ	09.06.86
21	Marc PFERTZEL (Fra)	21.05.81
25	Anther YAHIA (Alg)	21.03.82
MIDFIELDERS		
32	Mirkan AYDIN	08.07.87
22	Mimoun AZAOUAGH	17.11.82
5	Christoph DABROWSKI	01.07.78
7	Paul FREIER	26.07.79
19	Dennis GROTE	09.08.86
15	Daniel IMHOF (Can)	22.11.77
8	Andreas JOHANSSON (Swe)	10.03.82
23	Shinji ONO (Jap)	27.09.79
27	Kevin VOGT	23.09.91
FORWARDS		
11	Zlatko DEDIC (Slv)	05.10.84
10	Joel EPALLE (Cam)	20.02.78
16	Vahid HASHEMIAN (Irn)	21.07.76
14	Diego KLIMOWICZ (Arg)	06.07.74
9	Stanislav SESTAK (Slk)	16.12.82
CARETAKER COACH		
Frank HEINEMANN		08.01.65

B. DORTMUND

GOALKEEPERS		
40	Marcel HOTTECKE	25.04.87
1	Roman WEIDENFELLER	06.08.80
20	Marc ZIEGLER	13.06.76
DEFENDERS		
17	DEDE (Bra)	18.04.78
15	Mats HUMMELS	16.12.88
21	Uwe HUNEMEIER	09.01.86
45	Julian KOCH	11.11.90
25	Patrick OWOMOYELA	05.11.79
27	Felipe SANTANA (Bra)	17.03.86
29	Marcel SCHMELZER	22.01.88
4	Neven SUBOTIC (Ser)	10.12.88
33	David VRZOGIC	10.08.89
MIDFIELDERS		
22	Sven BENDER	27.04.89
16	Jakub BLASZCZYKOWSKI (Pol)	14.12.85
14	Markus FEULNER	12.02.82
30	Tamas HAJNAL (Hun)	15.03.81
5	Sebastian KEHL	13.02.80
36	Yasin OZTEKIN (Tur)	19.03.87
8	Nuri SAHIN (Tur)	05.09.88
7	TINGA (Bra)	13.01.78
FORWARDS		
18	Lucas BARRIOS (Arg)	13.11.84
19	Kevin GROSSKREUTZ	19.07.88
23	Christopher KULLMANN	19.09.86
13	Damien LE TALLEC (Fra)	14.10.90
11	Dimitar RANGELOV (Bul)	09.02.83
34	Bayram SADRIJAJ (Ser)	10.08.86
9	Nelson Haedo VALDEZ (Par)	28.11.83
10	Mohamed ZIDAN (Egy)	11.12.81
COACH		
Jurgen KLOPP		16.06.67

B. MONCHENGLADBACH

GOALKEEPERS		
30	Logan BAILLY (Bel)	27.12.85
1	Christofer HEIMEROTH	01.08.81
21	Frederic LOHE	12.08.88
41	Marc-Andre TER STEGEN	30.04.92
DEFENDERS		
4	Roel BROUWERS (Hol)	28.11.81
6	Jan-Ingwer CALLSEN-BRACKER	23.09.84
3	Filip DAEMS (Bel)	31.10.78
31	DANTE (Bra)	18.10.83
23	Christian DORDA	06.12.88
28	Tim HEUBACH	12.05.88
20	Jean-Sebastien JAURES (Fra)	30.09.77
15	Thomas KLEINE	28.12.77
22	Tobias LEVELS	22.11.86
7	Paul STALTERI (Can)	18.10.77
MIDFIELDERS		
19	Gal ALBERMAN (Isr)	17.04.83
18	Juan ARANGO (Ven)	17.05.80
26	Michael BRADLEY (USA)	31.07.87
24	Tony JANTSCHKE	07.04.90
14	Thorben MARX	01.06.91
8	Marcel MEEUWIS (Hol)	31.10.80
13	Roman NEUSTADTER	18.02.88
11	Marco REUS	31.05.89
FORWARDS		
29	Fabian BACKER	25.05.90
10	Raul BOBADILLA (Arg)	18.06.87
9	Roberto COLAUTTI (Isr)	24.05.82
16	Rob FRIEND (Can)	23.01.81
25	Moses LAMIDI	05.01.88
40	Karim MATMOUR (Alg)	25.06.85
27	Oliver NEUVILLE	01.05.73
COACH		
Michael FRONTZECK		26.03.64

EINTRACHT FRANKFURT

GOALKEEPERS		
22	Ralf FAHRMANN	27.09.88
1	Oka NIKOLOV (Mac)	25.05.74
21	Markus PROLL	28.08.79
28	Jan ZIMMERMANN	19.04.85
DEFENDERS		
29	CHRIS (Bra)	25.08.78
4	Maik FRANZ	05.08.81
24	Sebastian JUNG	22.06.90
2	Patrick OCHS	14.05.84
3	Nikola PETKOVIC (Ser)	28.03.86
23	Marco RUSS	04.08.85
16	Christoph SPYCHER (Swi)	30.03.78
5	Aleksandar VASOSKI (Mac)	27.11.79
MIDFIELDERS		
8	Zlatan BAJRAMOVIC (Bos)	12.06.79
30	CAIO (Bra)	29.05.86
7	Benjamin KOHLER	04.08.80
11	Umit KORKMAZ (Aut)	17.09.85
15	Mehdi MAHDAVIKIA (Irn)	24.07.77
14	Alexander MEIER	17.01.83
20	Christoph PREUSS	04.07.81
27	Pirmin SCHWEGLER (Swi)	09.03.87
13	Markus STEINHOFER	07.03.86
6	Selim TEBER	07.03.81
36	Marcel TITSCH-RIVERO	11.02.89
32	Faton TOSKI (Alb)	17.02.87
FORWARDS		
18	Ioannis AMANATIDIS (Gre)	03.12.81
17	Martin FENIN (Cze)	16.04.87
25	Marcel HELLER	19.01.86
10	Nikos LIBEROPOULOS (Gre)	04.08.75
34	Cenk TOSUN	07.06.91
26	Juvhel TSOUMOU	27.12.90
COACH		
Michael SKIBBE		04.08.65

FREIBURG

GOALKEEPERS		
37	Oliver BAUMANN	02.06.90
21	Michael LANGER (Aut)	06.01.85
1	Simon POUPLIN (Fra)	28.05.85
26	Manuel SALZ	06.08.85
DEFENDERS		
15	Oliver BARTH	06.10.79
5	Heiko BUTSCHER	28.07.80
2	Pavel KRMAS (Cze)	03.03.80
25	Sandro SIRIGU	07.10.88
38	Omer TOPRAK (Tur)	21.07.89
MIDFIELDERS		
10	Yacine ABDESSADKI (Mor)	01.01.81
20	Ivica BANOVIC (Cro)	02.08.80
3	Felix BASTIANS	09.05.88
6	CHA Du-ri (SKo)	25.07.80
18	Johannes FLUM	25.02.88
7	Cedric MAKIADI (DRC)	23.02.84
24	Mensur MUJDZA (Cro)	28.03.84
17	Alain Junior OLLE OLLE (Cam)	11.04.87
23	Julian SCHUSTER	15.04.85
30	David TARGAMADZE (Geo)	22.08.89
22	Eke UZOMA (Nig)	11.08.89
FORWARDS		
13	Tommy BECHMANN (Den)	22.12.81
19	Andreas GLOCKNER	25.02.88
8	Mohammadou IDRISSOU (Cam)	08.03.80
11	Jonathan JAGER (Fra)	23.05.78
27	Stefan REISINGER	14.09.81
16	Felix ROTH	13.11.87
COACH		
Robin DUTT		24.01.65

HAMBURG

GOALKEEPERS		
12	Wolfgang HESL	13.01.86
29	Tom MICKEL	19.04.89
1	Frank ROST	30.06.73
DEFENDERS		
17	Jerome BOATENG	03.09.88
20	Guy DEMEL (IvC)	13.06.81
7	Marcell JANSEN	04.11.85
5	Joris MATHUSEN (Hol)	05.04.80
4	Bastian REINHARDT	19.11.75
3	David ROZEHNAL (Cze)	05.07.80
2	Alex SILVA (Bra)	10.03.85
33	Miroslav STEPANEK (Cze)	15.01.90
MIDFIELDERS		
6	Dennis AOGO	14.01.87
19	Tolgay ARSLAN (Tur)	16.08.90
30	Collin BENJAMIN (Nam)	03.08.78
18	Romeo CASTELEN (Hol)	03.05.83
24	Christian GROSS	08.02.89
14	David JAROLIM (Cze)	17.05.79
21	Jonathan PITROIPA (BuF)	12.04.86
25	Tomas RINCON (Ven)	13.01.88
34	Kai-Fabian SCHULZ	12.03.90
28	Mickael TAVARES (CVI)	25.10.82
13	Robert TESCHE	27.05.87
15	Piotr TROCHOWSKI	22.03.84
8	ZE ROBERTO (Bra)	06.07.74
FORWARDS		
31	Maximilian BEISTER	06.09.90
16	Marcus BERG (Swe)	17.08.86
11	Eljero ELIA (Hol)	13.02.87
9	Jose Paolo GUERRERO (Per)	01.01.84
10	Mladen PETRIC (Cro)	01.01.81
35	Tunay TORUN (Tur)	21.04.90
COACH		
Bruno LABBADIA		08.02.66

HANNOVER 96

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Robert ENKE	24.08.77
27	Florian FROMLOWITZ	02.07.86
30	Morten JENSEN	20.09.87
DEFENDERS		
28	Leon BALOGUN	28.06.88
2	Vinicius BERGANTIN (Bra)	31.07.80
23	Sofian CHAHED (Tun)	18.04.83
35	Sofien CHAHED	22.11.89
6	Steve CHERUNDOLO (USA)	19.02.79
15	Constant DJAPKA (IvC)	17.10.86
5	Mario EGGIMANN (Swi)	24.01.81
21	Karim HAGGUI (Tun)	20.01.84
31	Tim HOFMANN	09.06.88
34	Konstantin RAUSCH	15.03.90
19	Christian SCHULZ	01.04.83
33	Manuel SCHMIEDEBACH	05.12.88
MIDFIELDERS		
3	Leon ANDREASEN (Den)	23.04.83
14	Hanno BALITSCH	02.01.81
10	Arnold BRUGGINK (Hol)	24.07.77
11	Didier KONAN (IvC)	25.02.84
20	Jacek KRZYNOWEK (Pol)	15.05.76
8	Altin LALA (Alb)	18.11.75
7	Sergio PINTO (Por)	16.10.80
22	Valdet RAMA	20.11.87
26	Jan ROSENTHAL	07.04.86
37	Salvatore ZIZZO (USA)	03.04.87
FORWARDS		
32	Mikael FORSSELL (Fin)	15.03.81
9	Mike HANKE	05.11.83
38	Jaroslaw LINDNER (Pol)	28.06.88
13	Jan SCHLAUDRAFF	18.07.83
24	Jiri STAJNER (Cze)	27.05.76
COACH		
Andreas BERGMANN		18.06.59

HERTHA BERLIN

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Jaroslav DROBNY (Cze)	09.10.79
30	Christopher GANG	10.05.88
12	Timo OCHS	17.10.81
37	Patrick SOBTZIK	11.06.90
DEFENDERS		
22	Rasmus BENGTSSON (Swe)	26.06.86
3	Arne FRIEDRICH	29.05.79
6	Christoph JANKER	14.02.85
2	KAKA (Bra)	16.05.81
5	Nemanja PEJCINOVIC (Ser)	04.11.87
35	Shervin RADJABALI-FARDI	17.05.91
13	Marc STEIN	07.07.85
4	Steve VON BERGEN (Swi)	10.06.83
MIDFIELDERS		
17	Bryan ARGUEZ (USA)	13.01.89
29	Sascha BIGALKE	08.01.90
27	CESAR (Bra)	14.07.79
7	CICERO (Bra)	26.08.84
8	Pal DARDAI (Hun)	16.03.76
20	Patrick EBERT	17.03.87
36	Lennart HARTMANN	03.04.91
44	Gojko KACAR (Ser)	26.01.87
11	Florian KRINGE	18.08.82
28	Fabian LUSTENBERGER (Swi)	02.05.88
25	Maximilian NICU	25.11.82
31	Fanol PERDEDAJ (Alb)	16.07.91
FORWARDS		
23	Valeri DOMOVCHIYSKI (Bul)	05.10.86
26	Lukasz PISZCZEK (Pol)	03.06.85
10	RAFFAEL (Bra)	28.03.85
9	Adrian RAMOS (Col)	22.01.86
39	Florian RIEDEL	09.04.90
18	Artur WICHNIAREK (Pol)	28.02.77
COACH		
Friedhelm FUNKEL		10.12.53

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HOFFENHEIM

GOALKEEPERS		
30	Jens GRAHL	22.09.88
1	Daniel HAAS	01.08.83
28	Timo HILDEBRAND	05.04.79
27	Ramazan OZCAN (Aut)	28.06.84
DEFENDERS		
2	Andreas BECK	13.03.87
5	Marvin COMPPER	14.06.85
35	Kevin CONRAD	10.08.90
6	Christian EICHNER	24.11.82
37	Manuel GULDE	12.02.91
26	Andreas IBERTSBERGER (Aut)	27.07.82
3	Matthias JAISSLE	05.04.88
24	Per NILSSON (Swi)	15.09.82
22	Jukka RAITALA (Fin)	15.09.88
14	Josip SIMUNIC (Cro)	18.02.78
25	Isaac VORSAH (Gha)	21.06.88
MIDFIELDERS		
10	CARLOS EDUARDO (Bra)	18.07.87
39	Pascal GROSS	15.06.91
21	Luiz GUSTAVO (Bra)	23.07.87
7	MAICOSUEL (Bra)	16.06.86
23	Sejad SALIHOVIC (Bos)	08.10.84
34	Boris VUKCEVIC	16.03.90
17	Tobias WEIS	30.07.85
36	Franco ZUCULINI (Arg)	05.09.90
FORWARDS		
9	Demba BA (Sen)	25.05.85
20	Chinedu Obasi, "EDU" (Nig)	01.06.86
19	Vedad IBISEVIC (Bos)	06.08.84
18	Prince TAGOE (Gha)	09.11.86
11	Marco TERRAZZINO	15.04.91
COACH		
Ralf RANGNICK		29.06.58

KOLN

GOALKEEPERS		
18	Thomas KESSLER	20.01.86
1	Faryd MONDRAGON (Col)	21.06.71
34	Miro VARVODIC (Cro)	15.05.89
DEFENDERS		
2	Miso BRECKO (Slv)	01.05.84
21	Pedro GEROMEL (Bra)	21.09.85
4	Marvin MATIP	25.09.85
23	Kevin McKENNA (Can)	21.01.80
3	Youssef MOHAMAD (Lib)	01.07.80
17	Kevin PEZZONI	22.03.89
16	Christopher SCHORCH	30.01.89
31	Alexander VAASSEN	09.12.91
6	Pierre WOME (Cam)	26.03.79
MIDFIELDERS		
13	Daniel BROSINSKI	17.07.88
27	Christian CLEMENS	04.08.91
22	Fabrice EHRET (Fra)	28.09.79
12	MANICHE (Por)	11.11.77
25	Adam MATUSCHYK (Pol)	14.02.89
33	Michael NIEDRIG	12.01.80
26	Lukas NOTTBECK	22.10.88
8	Armando PETIT (Por)	25.09.76
19	Taner YALCIN	18.02.90
FORWARDS		
20	Adil CHIHI (Mor)	21.02.88
7	Sebastien FRIES	23.04.85
30	Michael GARDAWSKI	25.09.90
9	Manneseh ISHIAKU (Nig)	09.01.83
11	Milivoje NOVAKOVIC (Slv)	18.05.79
10	Lukas PODOLSKI	04.06.85
14	Wilfried SANOU (BuF)	16.03.84
24	Jose Pierre VUNGUIDICA (Ang)	03.01.90
29	Sebastian ZIELINSKY	21.02.88
COACH		
Zvonimir SOLDO (Cro)		02.11.67

MAINZ

GOALKEEPER		
30	Pierre KLEINHEIDER	07.11.89
33	Heinz MULLER	30.05.78
1	Dino WACHE	01.11.73
29	Christian WETKLO	11.01.80
DEFENDERS		
26	Niko BUNGERT	24.10.86
6	Tim HOOGLAND	11.06.85
15	Jan KIRCHHOFF	01.10.90
4	Nikolce NOVESKI (Mac)	28.04.79
17	Marko ROSE	11.09.76
2	Bo SVENSSON (Den)	04.08.79
3	Peter VAN DER HEYDEN (Bel)	16.07.76
MIDFIELDERS		
5	Eugen GOPKO	05.01.91
27	Daniel GUNKEL	07.06.80
16	Florian HELLER	10.03.82
18	Jahmir HYKA (Alb)	08.03.88
25	Andreas IVANSCHITZ (Aut)	15.10.83
21	Miroslav KARHAN (Slk)	21.06.76
24	Zsolt LOW	29.04.79
13	Milorad PEKOVIC (Ser)	05.08.77
7	Eugen POLANSKI	17.03.86
19	Elkin SOTO (Col)	04.08.80
11	Filip TROJAN (Cze)	21.02.83
FORWARDS		
22	Chadli AMRI (Fra)	14.12.84
8	Srdjan BALJAK (Ser)	25.11.78
23	Aristide BANCE (BuF)	19.09.84
32	Dragan BOGAVAC (Mnt)	07.04.80
9	Felix BORJA (Ecu)	02.04.83
28	Gamal HAMZA (Egy)	05.12.81
31	Aleksandar PETRESKI	25.03.86
14	Andre SCHURRLE	06.11.90
COACH		
Thomas TUCHEL		29.08.73

NURNBERG

GOALKEEPERS		
18	Daniel KLEWER	04.03.77
1	Raphael SCHAFER	30.01.79
30	Alexander STEPHAN	15.09.86
DEFENDERS		
20	Pascal BIELER	26.02.86
15	Michael KAMMERMEYER	14.01.86
6	Dominic MAROH	04.03.87
4	Havard NORDTVEIT (Nor)	21.06.90
25	Javier PINOLA (Arg)	24.02.83
23	Matthew SPIRANOVIC (Aus)	27.06.88
31	Tomasz WELNICKI (Pol)	18.03.90
5	Andreas WOLF	12.06.82
MIDFIELDERS		
26	Thomas BROICH	29.01.81
2	Dennis DIEKMEIER	20.10.89
22	Ilkay GUNDOGAN	24.10.90
7	Daniel GYGAX (Swi)	28.08.81
16	Juri JUDT	24.07.86
24	Peer KLUGE	22.11.80
35	Jonatan KOTZKE	18.03.90
11	Marek MINTAL (Slk)	02.09.77
36	Jawhar MNARI (Tun)	08.11.76
13	Peter PERCHTHOLD	02.09.84
12	Marcel RISSE	17.12.89
21	Dario VIDOSIC (Aus)	08.04.87
FORWARDS		
19	Isaac BOAKYE (Gha)	26.11.81
10	Albert BUNJAKU (Swi)	29.11.83
9	Aggelos CHARISTEAS (Gre)	09.02.80
14	Maxim CHOUPO-MOTING	23.03.89
8	Christian EIGLER	01.01.84
17	Mike FRANTZ	14.10.86
33	Gungor KAYA (Tur)	27.04.90
COACH		
Michael DENNING		27.09.65

SCHALKE

GOALKEEPERS		
35	Mohamed AMSIF	07.02.89
1	Manuel NEUER	27.03.86
32	Mathias SCHOBER	08.04.76
DEFENDERS		
5	Marcelo BORDON (Bra)	07.01.76
29	Lubos HANZEL (Slk)	07.05.87
4	Benedikt HOWEDES	29.02.88
24	Christian PANDER	28.08.83
18	RAFINHA (Bra)	07.09.85
2	Heiko WESTERMANN	14.08.83
25	Carlos ZAMBRANO (Per)	10.07.89
MIDFIELDERS		
14	Gerald ASAMOAH	03.10.78
30	Levan KENIA (Geo)	18.10.90
3	Levan KOBIASHVILI (Geo)	10.07.77
26	Danny LATZA	07.12.89
8	MINEIRO (Bra)	02.08.75
16	Jan MORAVEK (Cze)	01.11.89
28	Christoph MORITZ	27.01.90
20	Vasilis PLIATSIKAS (Gre)	14.04.88
10	Ivan RAKITIC (Cro)	10.03.88
21	Lukas SCHMITZ	13.10.88
40	Predrag STEVANOVIC (Ser)	09.03.91
6	Albert STREIT	28.03.80
23	Emin YALIN (Tur)	19.03.89
FORWARDS		
19	Halil ALTINTOP (Tur)	08.12.82
17	Jefferson FARFAN (Per)	28.10.84
7	Lewis HOLTBY	18.09.90
13	Jermaine JONES (USA)	03.11.81
22	Kevin KURANYI	02.03.82
31	David LOHEIDER	09.02.91
27	Vicente SANCHEZ (Uru)	07.12.79
COACH		
Felix MAGATH		26.07.53

STUTTGART

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Jens LEHMANN	10.11.69
12	Alexander STOLZ	13.10.83
24	Sven ULREICH	03.08.88
DEFENDERS		
15	Arthur BOKA (IvC)	02.04.83
4	Khalid BOULAHROUZ (Hol)	28.12.81
27	Stefano CELOZZI	02.11.88
17	Mathieu DELPIERRE (Fra)	26.04.81
21	Ludovic MAGNIN (Swi)	20.04.79
6	Georg NIEDERMEIER	26.02.86
3	Ricardo OSORIO (Mex)	30.03.80
5	Serdar TASCI	24.04.87
35	Christian TRASCH	01.09.87
MIDFIELDERS		
10	Yildiray BASTURK (Tur)	24.12.78
26	Daniel DIDAVI	21.02.90
25	ELSON (Bra)	16.11.81
14	Patrick FUNK	11.02.90
13	Timo GEBHART	12.04.89
19	Roberto HILBERT	16.10.84
11	Thomas HITZLSPERGER	05.04.82
23	Aliaksandr HLEB (Blr)	01.05.81
28	Sami KHEDIRA	04.04.87
32	Zdravko KUZMANOVIC (Ser)	22.09.87
7	Martin LANIG	11.07.84
16	Sebastian RUDY	28.02.90
22	Matthias SCHWARZ	28.12.87
8	Jan SIMAK (Cze)	13.10.78
FORWARDS		
18	CACAU	27.03.81
9	Ciprian MARICA (Rom)	02.10.85
29	Pavel POGREBNYAK (Rus)	08.11.83
31	Alessandro RIEDLE	14.08.91
COACH		
Markus BABBEL		08.09.72

WERDER BREMEN

GOALKEEPERS		
21	Sebastian MIELITZ	18.07.89
33	Christian VANDER	24.10.80
1	Tim WIESE	17.12.81
DEFENDERS		
27	Niklas ANDERSEN	04.08.88
2	Sebastian BOENISCH	01.02.87
8	Clemens FRITZ	07.12.80
29	Per MERTESACKER	29.09.84
4	Naldo (Bra)	10.09.82
3	Petri PASANEN (Fin)	24.09.80
15	Sebastian PRODL (Aut)	21.06.87
41	Dominik SCHMIDT	01.07.87
5	Dusko TOSIC (Ser)	19.01.85
MIDFIELDERS		
31	Kevin ARTMANN	21.04.86
6	Tim BOROWSKI	02.05.80
22	Torsten FRINGS	22.11.76
17	Said HUSEJINOVIC (Bos)	13.05.88
32	Jose-Alex IKENG	30.01.88
20	Daniel JENSEN (Den)	25.06.79
25	Peter NIEMEYER	22.11.83
11	Mesut OZIL	15.10.88
45	Timo PERTHEL	11.02.89
7	Jurica VRANJES (Cro)	31.01.80
FORWARDS		
23	Hugo ALMEIDA (Por)	23.05.84
30	Marko FUTACS (Hun)	22.02.90
14	Aaron HUNT	04.09.86
10	Marko MARIN	13.03.89
39	Marcelo MORENO (Bol)	18.06.87
47	Torsten OEHRL	07.01.86
24	Claudio PIZARRO (Per)	03.10.78
9	Markus ROSENBERG (Swe)	27.09.82
COACH		
Thomas SCHAAF		30.04.61

WOLFSBURG

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Diego BENAGLIO (Swi)	08.09.83
35	Marwin HITZ	18.09.87
12	Andre LENZ	19.11.73
DEFENDERS		
3	Rodrigo ALVIM (Bra)	25.11.83
28	Daniel BAIER	18.05.84
43	Andrea BARZAGLI (Ita)	08.05.81
5	Ricardo COSTA (Por)	16.05.81
17	Alexander MADLUNG	11.07.82
19	Peter PEKARIK (Slk)	30.10.86
20	Sascha RIETHER	23.03.83
4	Marcel SCHAFER	07.06.84
6	Jan SIMUNEK (Cze)	20.02.87
MIDFIELDERS		
25	Christian GENTNER	14.08.85
13	Makoto HASEBE (Jap)	18.01.84
16	Fabian JOHNSON	11.12.87
7	JOSUE (Bra)	19.07.79
8	Thomas KAHLENBERG (Den)	20.03.83
31	Alexander LAAS	05.05.84
10	Zvjezdan MISIMOVIC (Bos)	05.06.82
14	Jonathan SANTANA (Par)	19.10.81
32	Sebastian SCHINDZIELORZ	21.01.79
15	Karim ZIANI (Alg)	17.08.82
FORWARDS		
24	Ashkan DEJAGAH	05.07.86
9	Edin DZEKO (Bos)	17.03.86
27	Alexander ESSWEIN	25.03.90
23	GRAFITE (Bra)	02.04.79
11	Obafemi MARTINS (Nig)	28.10.84
COACH		
Armin VEH		01.02.61

ITALY SERIE A

SQUADS 2009-10

ATALANTA

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Andrea CONSIGLI	27.01.87
32	Ferdinando COPPOLA	10.06.78
91	Francesco ROSSI	27.04.91
DEFENDERS		
6	Gianpaolo BELLINI	27.03.80
77	Paolo BIANCO	20.08.77
5	Thomas MANFREDINI	27.05.80
26	Maximiliano PELLEGRINO (Arg)	26.01.80
13	Federico PELUSO	20.01.84
21	Ivan RADOVANOVIC (Ser)	29.08.88
2	Leonardo TALAMONTI (Arg)	12.11.81
MIDFIELDERS		
16	Edgar BARRETO (Par)	15.07.84
18	Fabio CASERTA	24.09.78
23	COSTINHA (Por)	01.12.74
72	Cristiano DONI	01.04.73
79	FERREIRA PINTO (Bra)	10.12.79
8	Gyorgy GARICS (Aut)	08.03.84
17	Tiberio GUARENTE	01.11.85
19	Miguel LAYUN (Mex)	25.06.88
7	Nicola MADONNA	10.04.87
22	Simone PADOIN	18.03.84
FORWARDS		
9	Robert ACQUAFRESCA	11.09.87
70	Fabio CERAVOLO	05.03.87
11	Christian TIBONI	06.04.88
90	Simone TIRIBOCCHI	31.01.78
20	Jaime Valdes ZAPATA (Chi)	11.01.81
COACH		
Antonio CONTE		31.07.69

BARI

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Jean-Francois GILLET (Bel)	31.05.79
25	Daniele PADELLI	29.10.85
82	Vitangelo SPADAVECCHIA	25.11.82
DEFENDERS		
15	Nicola BELMONTE	15.04.87
19	Leonardo BONUCCI	01.05.87
3	Souleymane DIAMOUTENE (Mli)	30.01.83
5	Andrea MASIELLO	05.02.86
21	Alessandro PARISI	15.04.77
13	Andrea RANOCCHIA	16.02.88
27	Cristian STELLINI	27.04.74
MIDFIELDERS		
30	Riccardo ALLEGRETTI	15.02.78
4	Sergio ALMIRON (Arg)	07.11.80
90	Edgar ALVAREZ (Hon)	08.01.80
8	Filippo ANTONELLI	13.07.78
9	Daniele DE VEZZE	06.10.80
16	Massimo DONATI	26.03.81
22	Mariano DONDA (Arg)	25.03.82
6	Iago FALQUE (Spa)	04.01.90
14	Alessandro GAZZI	28.01.83
88	Pedro KAMATA (Ang)	06.09.81
11	Vladimir KOMAN (Hun)	16.03.89
17	Salvatore MASIELLO	31.01.82
37	Matteo PARO	17.03.83
80	Ivan RAICIC (Cro)	14.09.81
FORWARDS		
10	BARRETO (Bra)	12.07.85
18	Giuseppe GRECO	06.06.83
20	Vitali KUTUZOV (Blr)	20.03.80
69	Riccardo MEGGIORINI	04.09.85
7	Emanuel RIVAS (Arg)	17.03.83
63	Rey VOLPATO	27.06.86
COACH		
Giampiero VENTURA		14.01.48

BOLOGNA

GOALKEEPERS		
15	Roberto COLOMBO	24.08.75
28	Filippo SPITONI	17.04.84
33	Giacomo VENTURI	02.01.92
1	Emiliano VIVIANO	01.12.85
DEFENDERS		
50	Alessandro BASSOLI	19.06.90
6	Miguel Angel BRITOS (Uru)	17.07.85
23	Salvatore LANNA	31.07.76
18	Vangelis MORAS (Gre)	26.08.81
13	Daniele PORTANOVA	17.12.78
84	Andrea RAGGI	24.06.84
3	Rafael SANTOS (Bra)	10.11.84
21	Cristian ZENONI	23.04.77
MIDFIELDERS		
10	Davide BOMBARDINI	21.06.74
32	Federico CASARINI	07.08.89
14	Roberto GUANA	21.01.81
74	Luigi LAVECCHIA	25.06.81
51	Jacopo MANTOVANI	20.03.91
8	Nicola MINGAZZINI	13.08.80
26	Gaby MUDINGAYI (Bel)	01.10.81
5	Massimo MUTARELLI	13.01.78
90	Riccardo PASI	27.08.90
19	Giacomo TEDESCO	01.02.76
7	Francesco VALIANI	29.10.80
11	Luca VIGIANI	25.08.76
FORWARDS		
85	ADAILTON (Bra)	24.11.77
9	Marco DI VAIO	15.07.76
20	Henry GIMENEZ (Uru)	13.03.86
41	Massimo MARAZZINA	16.07.74
22	Pablo Daniel OSVALDO	12.01.86
25	Marcelo ZALAYETA (Uru)	05.12.78
COACH		
Franco COLOMBA		06.02.55

CAGLIARI

GOALKEEPERS		
24	Cristiano LUPATELLI	21.06.78
22	Federico MARCHETTI	07.02.83
12	Marco RUZITTU	15.06.91
1	Mauro VIGORITO	22.05.90
DEFENDERS		
31	Alessandro AGOSTINI	23.07.79
13	Davide ASTORI	07.01.87
21	Michele CANINI	05.06.85
3	Luca DI LAURA	25.03.91
6	Diego Luis LOPEZ (Uru)	22.08.74
28	Alessandro MANCUSI	21.03.90
15	Lino MARZORATI	12.10.86
14	Francesco PISANO	29.04.86
MIDFIELDERS		
20	Simone BARONE	30.04.78
8	Davide BIONDINI	24.01.83
19	Mario BRKLJACA (Cro)	13.02.85
2	Ignazio CARTA	18.05.91
5	Daniele CONTI	09.01.79
7	Andrea COSSU	30.05.80
4	Daniele DESSENA	10.05.87
10	Andrea LAZZARI	03.12.84
18	Andrea PAROLA	22.04.79
16	Mikhail SIVAKOV (Blr)	16.01.88
FORWARDS		
25	Enrico COTZA	03.07.88
29	Mattia GALLON	30.05.92
27	JEDA (Bra)	15.04.79
23	Joaquin LARRIVEY (Arg)	20.06.84
32	Alessandro MATRI	15.08.84
9	NENE (Bra)	28.07.83
30	Daniele RAGATZU	21.09.91
COACH		
Massimiliano ALLEGRI		11.08.67

CATANIA

GOALKEEPERS		
21	Mariano ANDUJAR (Arg)	30.07.83
30	Andrea CAMPAGNOLO	17.06.78
1	Tomas KOSICKY (Slk)	11.03.86
DEFENDERS		
22	Pablo ALVAREZ (Arg)	17.04.84
18	Blazej AUGUSTYN (Pol)	26.01.88
14	Giuseppe BELLUSCI	21.08.89
33	Ciro CAPUANO	10.07.81
12	Giovanni MARCHESE	17.10.84
2	Alessandro POTENZA	08.03.84
6	Matias SILVESTRE (Arg)	25.09.84
3	Nicolas SPOLLI (Arg)	20.02.83
23	Christian TERLIZZI	22.11.79
MIDFIELDERS		
10	Pablo BARRIENTOS (Arg)	17.01.85
27	Marco BIAGIANTI	14.04.81
5	Ezequiel CARBONI (Arg)	04.04.79
4	Gennaro DELVECCHIO	25.03.78
13	Mariano IZCO (Arg)	13.03.83
8	Pablo LEDESMA (Arg)	04.02.84
16	Cristian LLAMA (Arg)	26.06.86
17	Federico MORETTI	28.10.88
24	Simone PESCE	10.07.82
19	Adrian RICCHIUTI (Arg)	30.06.78
26	Fabio SCIACCA	16.05.89
28	Cristian SUARINO	23.04.90
FORWARDS		
29	Alfredo DONNARUMMA	11.03.90
25	Jorge MARTINEZ (Uru)	05.04.83
7	Giuseppe MASCARA	22.08.79
15	Takayuki MORIMOTO (Jap)	07.05.88
9	Gianvito PLASMATI	28.01.83
COACH		
Gianluca ATZORI		06.03.71

CHIEVO

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Michal MISKIEWICZ (Pol)	20.01.89
28	Stefano SORRENTINO	28.03.79
18	Lorenzo SQUIZZI	27.06.74
DEFENDERS		
21	Nicolas FREY (Fra)	06.03.84
8	Marco MALAGO	30.12.78
5	Davide MANDELLI	28.06.77
4	Andrea MANTOVANI	22.06.84
2	Santiago MORERO (Arg)	16.04.82
27	Fabio MORO	13.07.75
13	Felice PICCOLO	27.08.83
20	Gennaro SARDO	03.05.79
3	Francesco SCARDINA	11.12.81
33	Mario YEPES (Col)	13.01.76
MIDFIELDERS		
19	Luca ARIATTI	27.12.78
9	Simone BENTIVOGLIO	29.05.85
90	Yonese HANINE (Mor)	20.02.90
15	Manuel IORI	12.03.82
10	LUCIANO (Bra)	03.12.75
7	Michele MARCOLINI	02.10.75
6	Giampiero PINZI	11.03.81
16	Luca RIGONI	07.12.84
14	Alessandro SBAFFO	27.08.90
FORWARDS		
22	Elvis ABBRUSCATO	14.04.81
23	Erjon BOGDANI (Alb)	14.04.77
99	Mirco GASPARETTO	02.02.80
11	Pablo GRANOCHE (Uru)	05.09.83
83	MARCOS (Bra)	19.12.83
31	Sergio PELLISSIER	12.04.79
COACH		
Domenico DI CARLO		23.03.64

FIORENTINA

GOALKEEPERS		
35	Vlada AVRAMOV (Ser)	05.04.79
1	Sebastien FREY (Fra)	18.03.80
90	Andrea SECULIN	14.07.90
DEFENDERS		
25	Gianluca COMOTTO	16.10.78
3	Dario DAINELLI	06.09.79
29	Lorenzo DE SILVESTRI	23.05.88
5	Alessandro GAMBERINI	27.08.81
19	Massimo GOBBI	31.10.80
2	Per KROLDRUP (Den)	31.07.79
48	Federico MASI	10.10.90
14	Cesare NATALI	05.04.79
23	Manuel PASQUAL	13.03.82
6	Juan Manuel VARGAS (Per)	05.10.83
MIDFIELDERS		
45	Federico CARRARO	23.06.92
17	Francesco DI TACCHIO	20.04.90
4	Marco DONADEL	21.04.83
20	Martin JORGENSEN (Den)	06.10.75
47	Giacomo LEPRI	10.10.90
32	Marco MARCHIONNI	22.07.80
18	Riccardo MONTOLIVO	18.01.85
24	Mario Alberto SANTANA (Arg)	23.12.81
15	Cristiano ZANETTI	14.04.77
FORWARDS		
9	Jose Ignacio CASTILLO (Arg)	04.11.75
21	Khouma EL BABACAR (Sen)	17.03.93
11	Alberto GILARDINO	05.07.82
46	Pietro IEMMELLO	06.03.92
8	Stevan JOVETIC (Mnt)	02.11.89
10	Adrian MUTU (Rom)	08.01.79
7	Savio NSEREKO (Ger)	27.07.89
COACH		
Cesare PRANDELLI		19.08.57

GENOA

GOALKEEPERS		
32	Marco AMELIA	02.04.82
1	Danilo RUSSO	08.07.87
73	Alessio SCARPI	19.04.73
DEFENDERS		
25	Giuseppe BIAVA	08.05.77
26	Salvatore BOCCHETTI	30.11.86
4	Domenico CRISCITO	30.12.86
16	Andrea ESPOSITO	17.05.86
13	Ivan FATIC (Mnt)	21.08.88
23	Francesco MODESTO	16.02.82
24	Emiliano MORETTI	11.06.81
15	Sokratis PAPASTATHOPOULOS (Gre)	09.06.88
40	Nenad TOMOVIC (Ser)	30.08.87
MIDFIELDERS		
11	Stephan EL SHAARAWY	27.10.92
42	Mattia FERRARO	21.05.90
17	Bosko JANKOVIC (Ser)	01.03.84
28	Ivan JURIC (Cro)	25.08.75
5	Houssine KHARJA (Mor)	09.11.82
43	Dejan LAZAREVIC (Sln)	15.02.90
20	Giandomenico MESTO	25.05.82
77	Omar MILANETTO	30.11.75
7	Marco ROSSI	01.04.78
47	Arturo YMERI	26.01.92
21	Alberto ZAPATER (Spa)	13.06.85
FORWARDS		
9	Hernan CRESPO (Arg)	05.07.75
30	Luciano FIGUEROA (Arg)	19.05.81
33	Sergio FLOCCARI	12.11.81
46	Luca MIRACOLI	31.03.92
8	Rodrigo PALACIO (Arg)	05.02.82
10	Raffaele PALLADINO	17.04.84
14	Giuseppe SCULLI	23.03.81
COACH		
Gian Piero GASPERINI		26.01.58

INTERNAZIONALE

GOALKEEPERS		
12	JULIO CESAR (Bra)	03.09.79
21	Paolo ORLANDONI	12.08.72
1	Francesco TOLDO	02.12.71
DEFENDERS		
46	Luca CALDIROLA	01.02.91
26	Christian CHIVU (Rom)	26.10.80
2	Ivan CORDOBA (Col)	11.08.76
58	Giulio DONATI	05.02.90
52	Antonio ESPOSITO	05.09.90
56	Marek KYSELA (Cze)	10.07.92
6	LUCIO (Bra)	08.05.78
13	MAICON (Bra)	26.07.81
23	Marco MATERAZZI	19.08.73
25	Walter SAMUEL (Arg)	23.03.76
39	Davide SANTON	02.01.91
4	Javier ZANETTI (Arg)	10.08.73
MIDFIELDERS		
19	Esteban CAMBIASSO (Arg)	18.08.80
15	Rene KRHIN (Sln)	21.05.90
30	MANCINI (Bra)	01.06.80
8	Thiago MOTTA (Bra)	28.08.82
11	Sulley MUNTARI (Gha)	27.07.84
20	Joel Chukwuma OBI (Nig)	22.05.91
7	Ricardo QUARESMA (Por)	26.09.83
10	Wesley SNEIJDER (Hol)	09.06.84
5	Dejan STANKOVIC (Ser)	11.09.78
14	Patrick VIEIRA (Fra)	23.06.76
FORWARDS		
89	Marko ARNAUTOVIC (Aut)	19.04.89
45	Mario BALOTELLI	12.08.90
9	Samuel ETO'O (Cam)	10.03.81
22	Diego MILITO (Arg)	12.06.79
18	David SUAZO (Hon)	05.11.79
COACH		
Jose MOURINHO (Por)		26.01.63

JUVENTUS

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Gianluigi BUFFON	28.01.78
12	Antonio CHIMENTI	30.06.70
31	Mario KIREV (Bul)	15.08.89
13	Alex MANNINGER (Aut)	04.06.77
DEFENDERS		
23	Lorenzo ARIAUDO	11.06.89
2	Martin CACERES (Uru)	07.04.87
5	Fabio CANNAVARO	13.09.73
3	Giorgio CHIELLINI	14.08.84
6	Fabio GROSSO	28.11.77
21	Zdenek GRYGERA (Cze)	14.05.80
33	Nicola LEGROTTAGLIE	20.10.76
19	Cristian MOLINARO	30.07.83
15	Jonathan ZEBINA (Fra)	19.07.78
MIDFIELDERS		
16	Mauro CAMORANESI	04.10.76
29	Paolo DE CEGLIE	17.09.86
28	DIEGO (Bra)	28.02.85
35	Simone ESPOSITO	24.05.90
20	Sebastian GIOVINCO	26.01.87
8	Claudio MARCHISIO	19.01.86
4	Felipe MELO (Bra)	26.08.83
18	Christian POULSEN (Den)	28.02.80
37	Fausto ROSSI	03.12.90
7	Hasan SALIHAMIDZIC (Bos)	01.01.77
22	Mohamed SISSOKO (Mli)	22.01.85
30	TIAGO (Por)	02.05.81
FORWARDS		
11	AMAURI (Bra)	03.06.80
10	Alessandro DEL PIERO	09.11.74
9	Vincenzo IAQUINTA	21.11.76
40	Ciro IMMOBILE	20.02.90
17	David TREZEGUET (Fra)	15.10.77
COACH		
Ciro FERRARA		11.02.67

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LAZIO

GOALKEEPERS		
88	Tommaso BERNI	06.03.83
1	Albano BIZZARRI (Arg)	09.11.77
86	Fernando MUSLERA (Uru)	16.06.86
DEFENDERS		
22	Ivan ARTIPOLI	24.03.86
25	Emilson CRIBARI (Bra)	06.03.80
87	Mohido DIAKHITE (Fra)	02.03.87
11	Aleksandar KOLAROV (Ser)	10.11.85
2	Stephan LICHTSTEINER (Swi)	16.01.84
26	Stefan RADU (Rom)	22.10.86
13	Sebastiano SIVIGLIA	29.03.73
28	Guglielmo STENDARDO	06.05.81
MIDFIELDERS		
33	Roberto BARONIO	11.12.77
32	Cristian BROCCHI	30.01.76
6	Ousmane DABO (Fra)	08.02.77
4	Fabio FIRMANI	26.05.78
24	Cristian LEDESMA (Arg)	24.09.82
68	Christian MANFREDINI	05.01.75
8	MATUZALEM (Bra)	10.06.80
5	Stefano MAURI	08.01.80
23	Mourad MEGHNI (Fra)	16.04.84
3	Lionel SCALONI (Arg)	16.05.78
FORWARDS		
74	Julio CRUZ (Arg)	10.10.74
81	Simone DEL NERO	04.08.81
7	ELISEU (Por)	01.10.83
17	Pasquale FOGGIA	03.06.83
21	Simone INZAGHI	05.04.76
18	Stephen MAKINWA (Nig)	26.07.83
19	Goran PANDEV (Mac)	27.07.83
9	Tommaso ROCCHI	19.09.77
10	Mauro ZARATE (Arg)	18.03.87
COACH		
Davide BALLARDINI		06.01.64

LIVORNO

GOALKEEPERS		
92	Francesco BARDI	18.01.92
11	Francesco BENUSSI	15.10.81
89	Andrea CONTI	23.04.89
1	Alfonso DE LUCIA	12.11.83
DEFENDERS		
59	Marcus DINIZ (Bra)	01.08.87
6	Fabio GALANTE	20.11.73
13	Dario KNEZEVIC (Cro)	20.04.82
17	Leonardo Martin MIGLIONICO (Uru)	31.01.80
2	Romano PERTICONE	13.08.86
46	Mirko PIERI	24.07.78
4	Nelson RIVAS (Col)	25.03.83
MIDFIELDERS		
8	Martin BERGVOLD (Den)	20.02.84
83	Antonio CANDREVA	28.02.87
3	Antonio FILIPPINI	03.07.73
5	Davide MARCHINI	23.02.81
21	Davide MORO	02.01.82
24	MOZART (Bra)	08.11.79
7	Nico PULZETTI	13.02.84
77	Cristian RAIMONDI	30.04.81
87	Luigi VITALE	05.10.87
FORWARDS		
15	Gastne CELLERINO (Arg)	26.06.86
9	Tomas DANILEVCIUS (Lit)	18.07.78
18	Federico DIONISI	16.06.87
99	Cristiano LUCARELLI	04.10.75
10	Francesco TAVANO	02.03.79
COACH		
Serse COSMI		05.05.56

MILAN

GOALKEEPERS		
12	Christian ABBIATI	08.07.77
1	DIDA (Bra)	07.10.73
50	Filippo PERUCCHINI	06.10.91
31	Flavio ROMA	21.06.74
30	Marco STORARI	07.01.77
DEFENDERS		
77	Luca ANTONINI	04.02.82
25	Daniele BONERA	31.05.81
19	Giuseppe FAVALLI	08.01.72
18	Marek JANKULOVSKI (Cze)	09.05.77
4	Kakha KALADZE (Geo)	27.02.78
13	Alessandro NESTA	19.03.76
44	Massimo ODDO	14.06.76
5	Oguchi ONYEWU (USA)	13.05.82
33	THIAGO SILVA (Bra)	22.09.84
15	Gianluca ZAMBROTTA	19.02.77
MIDFIELDERS		
20	Ignazio ABATE	12.11.86
23	Massimo AMBROSINI	29.05.77
16	Mathieu FLAMINI (Fra)	07.03.84
8	Gennaro GATTUSO	09.01.78
21	Andrea PIRLO	19.05.79
10	Clarence SEEDORF (Hol)	01.04.76
51	Rodney STRASSER (SLe)	30.03.90
FORWARDS		
22	Marco BORRIELLO	18.06.82
49	Davide DI GENNARO	16.06.88
11	Klaas-Jan HUNTELAAR (Hol)	12.08.83
9	Filippo INZAGHI	09.08.73
7	Alexandre PATO (Bra)	02.09.89
80	RONALDINHO (Bra)	21.03.80
17	Gianmarco ZIGONI	10.05.91
COACH		
LEONARDO (Bra)		05.09.69

NAPOLI

GOALKEEPERS		
26	Morgan DE SANCTIS	26.03.77
22	Matteo GIANELLO	07.05.76
1	Gennaro IEZZO	08.06.73
DEFENDERS		
6	Salvatore ARONICA	20.01.78
14	Hugo CAMPAGNARO (Arg)	27.06.80
28	Paolo CANNAVARO	26.06.81
96	Matteo CONTINI	16.04.80
2	Gianluca GRAVA	07.03.77
77	Leandro RINAUDO	09.05.83
33	Erminio RULLO	19.02.84
13	Fabiano SANTACROCE	24.08.86
16	Camilo ZUNIGA (Col)	14.12.85
MIDFIELDERS		
32	Nicolas AMODIO	10.03.83
18	Mariano BOGLIACINO (Uru)	02.06.80
21	Luca CIGARINI	20.06.86
15	Jesus DATOLO (Arg)	19.05.84
23	Walter GARGANO (Uru)	27.07.84
17	Marek HAMSIK (Slk)	27.07.87
11	Cristian MAGGIO	11.02.82
5	Michele PAZIENZA	05.08.82
FORWARDS		
19	German DENIS (Arg)	10.09.81
9	Erwin HOFFER (Aut)	14.04.87
7	Ezequiel LAVEZZI (Arg)	03.05.85
12	Inacio PIA (Bra)	22.03.82
27	Fabio QUAGLIARELLA	31.01.83
COACH		
Walter MAZZARRI		01.10.61

PALERMO

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Giacomo BRICHETTO	09.05.83
83	RUBINHO (Bra)	04.08.82
46	Salvatore SIRIGU	12.01.87
DEFENDERS		
42	Federico BALZARETTI	06.12.81
5	Cesare BOVO	14.01.83
16	Mattia CASSANI	26.08.83
3	Dorin GOIAN (Rom)	12.12.80
24	Simon KJAER (Den)	26.03.89
21	Cristian MELINTE (Rom)	09.05.88
26	Michel MORGANELLA (Swi)	17.05.89
51	Adriano SIRAGUSA	13.03.90
MIDFIELDERS		
14	Nicolas BERTOLO (Arg)	02.01.86
88	Manuele BLASI	17.08.80
23	Mark BRESCIANO (Aus)	11.02.80
77	Daniele CONTI	27.05.89
18	Guido DAVI	16.09.90
11	Fabio LIVERANI	29.04.76
8	Giulio MIGLIACCIO	23.06.81
9	Antonio NOCERINO	09.04.85
6	Javier PASTORE (Arg)	20.06.89
30	Fabio SIMPLICIO (Bra)	23.09.79
52	Antonino SPOSITO	13.04.90
4	Giovanni TEDESCO	13.05.72
FORWARDS		
20	Igor BUDAN (Cro)	22.04.80
50	Ferdinando CAMPIONE	10.04.92
7	Edinson CAVANI (Uru)	14.02.87
54	Marco GIOVIO	05.07.90
99	Levan MCHEDLIDZE (Geo)	24.03.90
10	Fabrizio MICCOLI	27.06.79
19	Davide SUCCI	11.10.81
COACH		
Walter ZENGA		28.04.60

PARMA

GOALKEEPERS		
83	Antonio MIRANTE	08.07.83
1	Nicola PAVARINI	24.02.74
22	Stefano RUSSO	06.03.89
DEFENDERS		
3	Luca ANTONELLI	11.02.87
7	Paolo CASTELLINI	25.03.79
15	Hernan Paolo DELLAFIORE	02.02.85
29	Pablo FONTANELLO (Arg)	26.09.84
6	Alessandro LUCARELLI	22.07.77
24	Massimo PACI	09.05.78
2	Christian PANUCCI	12.04.73
26	Mohamed Lamine TRAORE (Gui)	13.10.91
5	Cristian ZACCARDO	21.12.81
19	Damiano ZENONI	23.04.77
MIDFIELDERS		
32	Alessandro BUDEL	25.02.81
18	Nicolas CORDOVA (Chi)	09.02.79
10	Blerim DZEMAILI (Swi)	12.04.86
14	Daniele GALLOPPA	15.05.85
8	Francesco LUNARDINI	03.11.84
21	Alessio MANZONI	10.04.87
17	McDonald MARIGA (Ken)	04.04.87
4	Stefano MORRONE	26.10.78
11	Andrea PISANU	07.01.82
FORWARDS		
23	Nicola AMORUSO	29.08.74
20	Jonathan Ludovic BIABIANY (Fra)	28.04.88
86	Valeri BOJINOV (Bul)	15.02.86
9	Davide LANZAFAME	09.02.87
43	Alberto PALOSCHI	04.01.90
COACH		
Francesco GUIDOLIN		03.10.55

ROMA

GOALKEEPERS		
25	ARTHUR (Bra)	25.01.81
27	JULIO SERGIO (Bra)	08.11.78
1	Bogdan LOBONT (Rom)	18.01.78
DEFENDERS		
3	Marco ANDREOLLI	10.06.86
15	Vitorino ANTUNES (Por)	01.04.87
29	Nicolas BURDISSO (Arg)	12.04.81
77	Marco CASSETTI	29.05.77
2	CICINHO (Bra)	24.06.80
4	JUAN (Bra)	01.02.79
5	Philippe MEXES (Fra)	30.03.82
13	Marco MOTTA	14.05.86
17	John Arne RIISE (Nor)	24.09.80
22	Max TONETTO	18.11.74
MIDFIELDERS		
19	Julio BAPTISTA (Bra)	01.10.81
33	Matteo BRIGHI	14.02.81
16	Daniele DE ROSSI	24.07.83
14	Ricardo FATY (Fra)	04.08.86
21	Stefano GUBERTI	06.11.84
20	Simone PERROTTA	17.09.77
26	Adrian Florin PIT (Rom)	16.07.83
7	David PIZARRO (Chi)	11.09.79
11	Rodrigo TADDEI (Bra)	06.03.80
FORWARDS		
24	Alessio CERCI	23.07.87
18	Mauro ESPOSITO	13.06.79
94	Jeremy MENEZ (Fra)	07.05.87
89	Stefano OKAKA	09.08.89
10	Francesco TOTTI	27.09.76
9	Mirko VUCINIC (Mac)	01.10.83
COACH		
Claudio RANIERI		20.10.51

SAMPDORIA

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Luca CASTELLAZZI	19.07.75
90	Vincenzo FIORILLO	13.01.90
21	Matteo GUARDALBEN	05.06.74
DEFENDERS		
5	Pietro ACCARDI	12.09.82
22	Fabrizio CACCIATORE	08.10.86
28	Daniele GASTALDELLO	25.06.83
15	Vasco REGINI	09.09.90
6	Stefano LUCCHINI	02.10.80
13	Marco ROSSI	30.09.87
MIDFIELDERS		
19	Daniele FRANCESCHINI	13.01.76
7	Daniele MANNINI	25.10.83
20	Marco PADALINO (Swi)	08.12.83
17	Angelo PALOMBO	25.09.81
16	Andrea POLI	29.09.89
77	Franco SEMIOLI	20.06.80
91	Roberto SORIANO	08.02.91
23	Marius STANKEVICIUS (Lit)	15.07.81
12	Fernando TISSONE (Arg)	24.07.86
8	Luciano ZAURI	20.01.78
3	Reto ZIEGLER (Swi)	16.01.86
FORWARDS		
11	Claudio BELLUCCI	31.05.75
99	Antonio CASSANO	12.07.82
88	Salvatore FOTI	08.08.88
10	Giampaolo PAZZINI	02.08.84
9	Nicola POZZI	30.06.86
COACH		
Luigi DEL NERI		23.08.50

SIENA

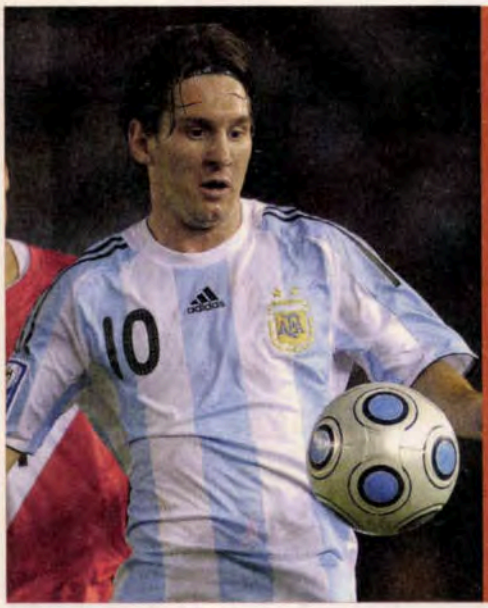
GOALKEEPERS		
85	Gianluca CURCI	12.07.85
89	Mihail IVANOV (Bul)	07.08.89
53	Anssi JAAKKOLA (Fin)	13.03.87
31	Gianluca PEGOLO	25.03.81
DEFENDERS		
15	Goncalo BRANDAO (Por)	09.10.86
3	Cristiano DEL GROSSO	24.03.83
77	Daniele FICAGNA	23.02.81
13	Luca ROSSETTINI	09.05.85
21	Andrea ROSSI	07.11.86
6	Claudio TERZI	19.06.84
MIDFIELDERS		
10	Paul CODREA (Rom)	04.04.81
12	Albin EKDAL (Swe)	28.07.89
14	FILIPE (Bra)	28.05.97
17	Michele FINI	14.06.74
19	Agostino GAROFALO	29.09.84
2	Gael GENEVIER (Fra)	26.06.82
28	Mirko GUADALUPI	09.02.87
24	Mate JAJALO (Cro)	25.05.88
23	Lukas JAROLIM (Cze)	29.07.76
5	Francesco PARRAVICINI	31.01.82
87	Aleandro ROSI	17.05.87
8	Simone VERGASSOLA	24.01.76
FORWARDS		
25	Joazinho ARROE (Per)	05.06.92
11	Emanuele CALAIO	08.01.82
18	Abdelkader GHEZZAL (Fra)	05.12.84
99	Niccolo GIANNETTI	12.05.91
63	Marcelo LARRONDO (Arg)	16.08.88
32	Massimo MACCARONE	06.09.79
9	Michele PAOLUCCI	06.02.86
7	REGINALDO (Bra)	31.07.83
COACH		
Marco GIAMPAOLO		02.08.67

UDINESE

GOALKEEPERS		
6	Emanuele BELARDI	09.10.77
22	Samir HANDANOVIC (Sln)	14.07.84
1	Rafael ROMO (Ven)	25.02.90
DEFENDERS		
15	Ricardo CHARA (Col)	24.05.90
13	Andrea CODA	25.04.85
4	Juan CUADRADO (Col)	26.05.88
80	Maurizio DOMIZZI	28.06.80
19	FELIPE (Bra)	31.07.84
32	Damiano FERRONETTI	01.11.84
24	Aleksandar LUKOVIC (Ser)	23.10.82
26	Giovanni PASQUALE	05.01.82
2	Cristian ZAPATA (Col)	30.09.86
MIDFIELDERS		
20	Kwadwo ASAMOAH (Gha)	09.12.88
8	Dusan BASTA (Ser)	18.08.84
66	Ergun BERISHA (Swi)	24.06.88
21	Gaetano D'AGOSTINO	03.06.82
88	Gokhan INLER (Swi)	27.06.84
3	Mauricio ISLA (Chi)	12.06.88
23	JAIME (Spa)	31.07.90
18	Ritchie KITOKO (DRC)	11.06.88
84	Francesco LODI	23.03.84
5	Christian OBODO (Nig)	11.05.84
14	Paolo SAMMARCO	17.03.83
28	Niki ZIMLING (Den)	19.04.85
FORWARDS		
17	ALEMAO (Bra)	02.03.89
9	Bernardo CORRADI	30.03.76
10	Antonio DI NATALE	13.10.77
63	Antonio FLORO FLORES	18.06.83
7	Simone PEPE	30.08.83
11	Alexis SANCHEZ (Chi)	19.12.88
COACH		
Pasquale MARINO		13.07.62

Famous Last Words

Who said what and why



"Strategy in Barcelona is in the hands of Andres Iniesta, Xavi and Yaya Toure. Messi is the one who completes the move, yet with Argentina he has to do everything. It is difficult to play when the musicians are in Rome and the conductor is in Buenos Aires"

Former Argentina boss Cesar Luis Menotti on the national team dilemma facing Leo Messi

"I haven't completed my mission in football"

FIFA chief Sepp Blatter tells *La Gazzetta dello Sport* he will be going for a fourth term in office

"What on Earth do we do with a stadium costing £60million which no one wants to go to?"

Portuguese social democrat politician Ulisses Pereira hits out at the money invested in the Euro 2004 ground at Aveiro – the fiefdom of national federation president Gilberto Madail

Ground for complaint...Aveiro

"Barcelona play better football than us. But only because they have been together for years"

Cristiano Ronaldo implores Real Madrid's critics to be patient

"I'm honoured by all these candidates for selection, starting with the many *Oriundi* [foreign players with Italian ancestors]. Maybe I should ask FIFA to enlarge squad numbers"

Italy boss Marcello Lippi tires of the media telling him to pick Cassano, Totti, et al.

"It's a scandal and he must apologise"

Blackburn Rovers manager Sam Allardyce reacts with anger after Republic of Ireland coach Giovanni Trapattoni suggests long-term injury victim Steven Reid is unlikely to play again

"I've never thought about selling Milan. In my eyes, it's a sentimental affair – not an economic one"

Milan owner and Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi denies he is seeking a foreign buyer

"Not one Italian in the Ballon d'Or shortlist of 30. Our football finds itself in obscurity, dominated for the past four years by a club which is international only in name"

Maurizio Crosetti of *La Repubblica* laments standards in the peninsula – and particularly at champions Internazionale

"It's an embarrassment, I have no explanation"

Real Madrid coach Manuel Pellegrini cannot account for his side's 4-0 defeat to third-tier Alcorcon in the Spanish Cup

"It was perhaps my knowledge of basketball, with its constant changes of personnel, which prompted me to use a rotation policy in football. It's a case of adapting to the players' physical state and the busy calendar"

Liverpool boss Rafa Benitez calls time-out on those who criticise him for his aversion to a settled side

"They have nicked money from us"

Bayern Munich general manager Uli Hoeness claims city rivals and fellow Allianz Arena residents 1860 Munich owe them for catering

"It seems this team is decomposing"

Robert Pires has that sinking feeling at surprise La Liga slow starters Villarreal

Torpedoed...the Yellow Submarine

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